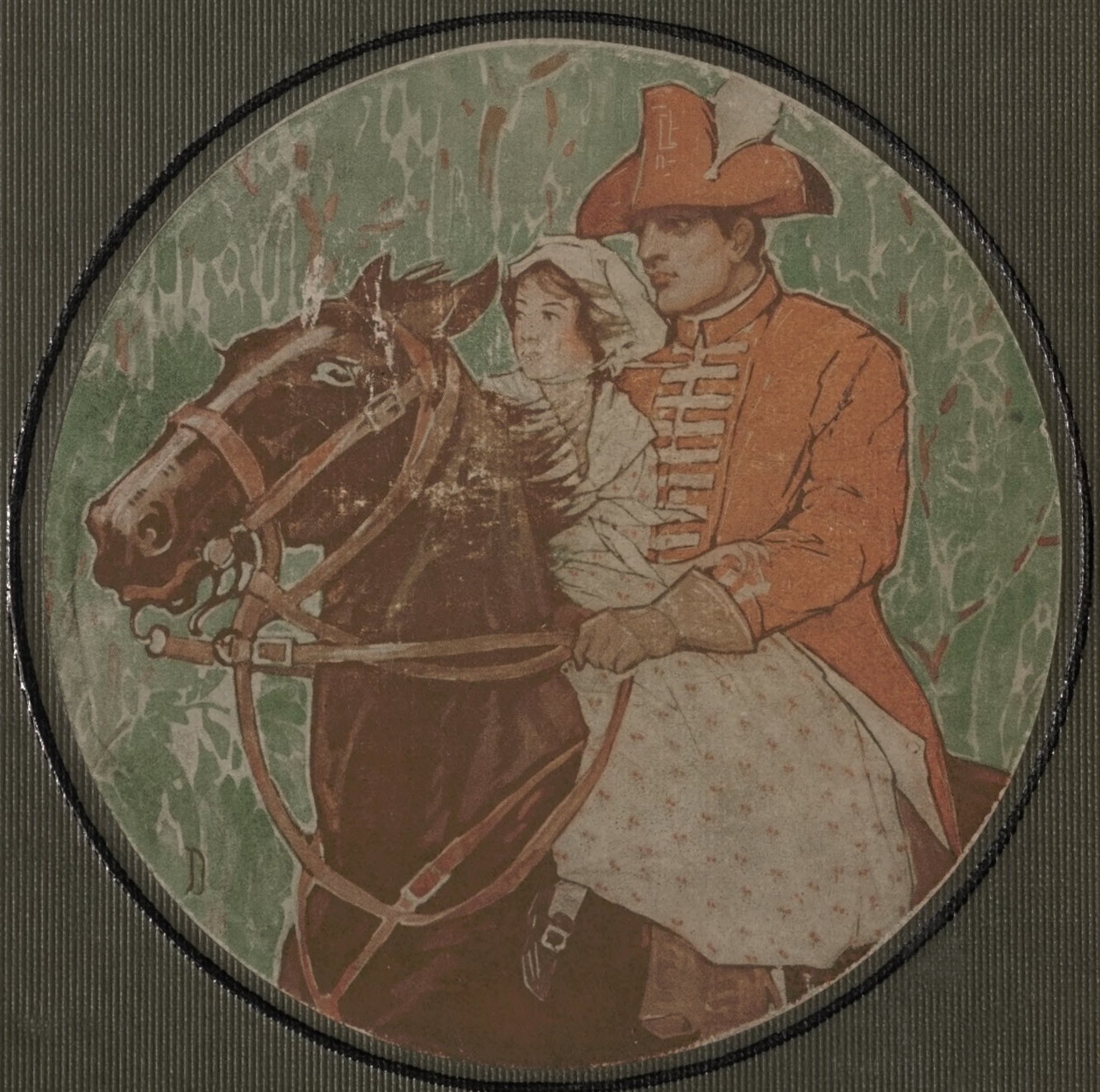
A little Maid of Bunker Hill



ALICE TURNER CURTIS

Introduction

THE first book of this series was "A Little Maid of Province Town," which was the story of Anne Nelson, a little girl of Cape Cod. Her father had disappeared and some of his friends thought he had been drowned at sea. The fact was, however, that he had joined the American Army in Boston, and Anne, sailing there as a stowaway, was chosen to be the bearer of a very important message.

In the story "A Little Maid of Massachusetts Colony" Anne runs away to Brewster, and is escorted by Indians to the home of her friends, the Freemans. Mr. Freeman takes her to Boston to see her father. On the way they are arrested as spies, but Anne escapes, makes her way to Boston, and helps in the capture of a British schooner.

"A Little Maid of Narragansett Bay" is also a story of the Revolutionary war, and tells of Penelope Balfour and her brother Ted, who lived on a little farm in Rhode Island while

their father was serving his country in the American Army. The courage and quickness of the little girl were of value to the American camp, which was near her home, and her brother's boat, "Freedom," wins hearty praise for its share in carrying patriot messages.

The present story deals with Millicent Austin, a little girl who lived at Charles Town near Bunker Hill in the days when General Gage and his British soldiers held the city of Boston.

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CHAPTER I

A BIRTHDAY VISIT

"MILLY, shall we go past Boston Common, where the English soldiers are camped?" asked Dicky Austin eagerly, as he climbed into the chaise beside his twin sister Prue.

"Yes, if we ever get started," answered Millicent. "Mother!" she called, holding open the gate so that no time would be lost when her mother did appear.

"Coming," responded Mrs. Austin, and in a moment she came hurrying down the path, a basket in each hand.

Mr. Austin smiled as he took the baskets and stowed them under the wide seat of the chaise.

"Do you expect to be captured by the British, Prudence, that you are taking so much provision?" he asked, as he handed her into the chaise, where the twins received her joyfully.

"I am not afraid of the British, even if the men of Charles Town and Cambridge do permit the soldiers of General Gage to carry off their cannon and powder," replied his wife. For, on the previous week, this very thing had happened; and already the Americans were realizing that the English general, who had landed his forces in Boston, meant to enforce the unjust demands of the English king; and the patriots of Boston and Charles Town were resolved to protect their rights.

"Don't tell General Gage what you think of him if you happen to meet on your journey," responded Mr. Austin jestingly.

"'No danger shall affright, no difficulties shall intimidate us,'" said Mrs. Austin with a gay little laugh, quoting the words of one of America's defenders.

"Oh, mother, do let's start. We shan't get to Grandma Barclay's to-day," urged Millicent, who often wondered why her father and mother were always so ready to be amused, even about such a serious thing as regiments of English soldiers in Boston, who were there, she had heard her father say, to make slaves of the people of Massachusetts. Millicent was quite sure

that there was nothing to laugh at in that; and she was rather inclined to feel that it was almost wrong to be amused at anything connected with English soldiers.

"Start for home in good season, Prudence," said Mr. Austin, handing the reins to Milly's mother; and with gay "good-byes" from the children, and a word to the pretty sorrel horse, the little party were off for their day's visit.

Millicent and little Prue sat beside their mother on the broad seat, while Dicky sat on a cricket in front of them.

It was a pleasant day in early September in 1774. There was the fragrance of ripening fruit from the orchards mingling with the salt air which swept across the marshes. Their road skirted the foot of Bunker Hill and led through the market-place to the ferry, which they must cross to reach Boston. The Austin farm was just outside Charles Town; and Millicent felt that to cross the ferry, drive through the fine streets of Boston, and out to Grandma Barclay's big house in Roxbury, was indeed a great adventure. Beside that it was Millicent's tenth birthday, and this excursion was planned as her special treat.

As "Goldy" trotted down the sloping incline to the broad, flat-bottomed ferry-boat, the children peered eagerly out toward the vessels lying at anchor in the harbor, and at the heights of Copps Hill on the Boston side.

The ferryman greeted Mrs. Austin cordially, and had a pleasant word for the children. Millicent wondered to herself why everybody grew so serious when they spoke of "British soldiers."

"These are indeed troublous times, Mistress Austin," she heard the ferryman say, "and you Charles Town people are fortunate to have the river between you and Boston. 'Tis well the bridge, that people have been so anxious for, has not been built."

"But the English soldiers seem civil to the people, do they not?" questioned her mother anxiously.

Millicent did not hear the ferryman's reply, for now they were landing and in a few minutes "Goldy" had turned into Hanover Street.

"That is where your father's friend, Dr. Joseph Warren, lives," said Mrs. Austin, pointing out a pleasant house to the children, "and there is the doctor himself. I must indeed have a word with him."

As the chaise came to a standstill Dr. Warren was just coming down the steps of the house, and hastened forward to greet his friends. The children all looked at him with admiring eyes, for the young doctor's good looks and smiling face won their instant approval.

Millicent was quite sure that the king of England himself could not wear finer clothes than Dr. Warren. His coat of fawn-colored cloth, the high stock and ruffled shirt, the white cloth waistcoat and breeches laced with silver, and the shoes with their shining buckles seemed to be exactly right for him. As he stood there hat in hand, talking to her mother, he made a picture that Millicent always remembered.

He shook hands with each of the children as he bade them good-bye. "All loyal Americans, I am sure," he said, and the children promptly replied, "Yes, sir," although none of them really understood just what "loyal Americans" might mean. They were confident, however, that if Dr. Warren thought it a fine thing to be a "loyal American" that they would do their best.

"What is a 'loyal American,' mother?" Millicent asked, as they drove through King Street

and turned onto Common Street, which would take them past the Common and straight out to Roxbury.

Mrs. Austin's pleasant gray eyes were very serious as she turned toward Millicent.

"I am indeed to blame that you should need to ask me such a question," she said, "and 'tis one your father could reply to far better. You have just spoken to a loyal American, a man who is giving the best of himself and all he has to make this a free and happy country."

But Millicent's gray eyes still rested questioningly on her mother's face. "Loyal American?" she repeated questioningly; and the serious look faded from her mother's face, and she smiled.

"I'll have to try again, won't I? Dicky, I want you and Prue to listen to what mother says. You heard Dr. Warren say that he hoped you were all loyal Americans. Now, you three children all love your father and mother."

The twins nodded solemnly; Millicent reached across little Prue and patted her mother's arm.

"Well," continued Mrs. Austin, "to be a 'loyal American' is to love America just as you do father and mother. To be willing to do your

best for her; to give up anything to protect her. America is this beautiful country that reaches out her arms to hold us all safe, sure that none of her children will betray her love."

"I guess I know," responded Millicent soberly.

Dicky moved about uneasily on the cricket.

"Mayn't I drive, mother?" he asked.

"You'll have to ask Millicent," responded Mrs. Austin. "You know this is her birthday treat, and she is to say just what we are all to do until we start home."

"I may, mayn't I, sister?" said the little boy.

"Yes, Dicky," said Millicent, and Mrs. Austin handed the reins to Dicky. For "Goldy" was sure to go along quite soberly.

Now and then they passed teams coming in from the country laden with wood or produce for the people of Boston; and once a party of British officers on horseback raced past them, the dust from their horses' feet covering the chaise and its occupants. But no misfortune befell them, and it was still in the early part of the forenoon when they turned into an elm-shaded driveway which led to Grandmother Barclay's big yellow house.

It was a much finer and larger house than their own home in Charles Town. There were terraces with stone steps in front of the house, and a broad porch with seats, and a big shining brass knocker on the front door.

"How quiet the house looks," said Mrs. Austin, as "Goldy" stopped in front of the house. "I wonder where Christopher is?"

For Christopher was the colored man who had lived on the Barclay place for many years, and was always at hand to take care of "Goldy."

"Jump out, Millicent, and run up the steps and see if grandma is at home."

Millicent obeyed. Now she could lift the knocker and hear it clang, she thought joyfully. But before she reached the porch the door opened and there stood grandma, smiling a welcome; at the same moment Black Chris came hurrying from the stable, and hastened to help Mrs. Austin and the children from the chaise.

"I have been watching for you from the upper windows," said Grandma Barclay, bending to kiss Millicent, "but you came more quickly than I expected."

Millicent kept fast hold of Grandma Barclay's hand as they walked across the wide hall to the

pleasant room where there were so many wonderful and interesting things. First of all there was the paper on the wall, where ladies and little girls, holding beautiful blue parasols, walked in processions toward castles over high bridges.

Dicky and little Prue always began at the door and followed the pictured ladies straight around the room to the fireplace. But Millicent kept her clasp on Grandmother Barclay's hand until they reached the big sofa which stood across one corner of the room. However, before the sofa was reached, there was the sound of steps on the stairs, and suddenly Millicent felt a pair of arms around her neck and heard a delighted voice saying: "Oh, Cousin Milly! Cousin Milly! Isn't this fine?" and looked around into the laughing face of her cousin Mary Barclay.

"Oh, Mary! and you promised not to come in until I called you," said grandma. But her voice sounded as if she had really quite expected to see Mary.

Mary Barclay was twelve years old, but she was not much taller than Millicent. Her eyes were brown, and her hair, like her cousin's,

brown and wavy. She had on a dress of blue checked linen, and wore white knit stockings and black slippers. Mary's home was in Dedham, and the two cousins did not often meet.

After Mary had kissed the twins and spoken to her Aunt Prudence, she and Millicent went out on the porch and down the terrace steps to the driveway.

"Grandmother is having a fine dinner to-day," said Mary. "There is turkey, and jelly, and a fine pie; we must not go far, for she means to have it early."

"'Tis because it's my birthday," responded Millicent, "and there'll be a cake."

Mary stopped short, and took her arm from her cousin's shoulder. "'Tis nothing of the sort," she declared. "The fine dinner is because I am here. My father will take me home to-morrow, and so 'twill be the last day."

"But 'tis my birthday," insisted Millicent, "and I am named for grandmother. So I thought perhaps ——" and Millicent hesitated and looked at her cousin a little anxiously.

Mary's face brightened as she noted the younger girl's hesitation. "Oh, well, it's all

right," she said pleasantly, "only it's just as well for you to know that it's an extra dinner on my account. If it happens to be your birthday, why, so much the better. Let's go down to the stable. Did you know that both grandma's horses and both the cows are going to be sent to Dedham?"

"What for?" asked Millicent.

"To keep the British from taking them," Mary answered briskly. "Come on, let's go in the stable," and Millicent followed her cousin, and in a moment the little girls were looking up into the big soft eyes of the two brown horses.

"Can you ride horseback?" asked Mary, reaching up to rub the nose of the horse nearest her.

"I have ridden 'Goldy'; but father always walks beside me," replied Millicent.

"Phff! That's not riding," said Mary. "I can ride. I could teach you if you wanted to learn. We might just practice now," she continued eagerly. "Chris isn't here, and there's nobody to stop us."

Millicent looked at her cousin a little doubtfully. She was quite sure that Grandmother

Barclay would not want them to try to ride the big brown horses; but she hardly dared to interfere with Mary, who seemed confident that she could do exactly as she wished.

Mary reached up and unfastened the door of the stall, and held it open, and the big horse walked slowly out. "Take hold of his mane, Millicent, and hang on," commanded Mary, running to the next stall and opening the door.

Millicent ran toward the horse to obey her cousin's command, but the horse did not wait for her. Shaking his head, with a little snort of delight to be free, he sped out of the open door, closely followed by his mate, which Mary had been unable to stop.

"Oh, they're gone! They're racing right across the meadow!" called Millicent.

"It's all your fault. Why didn't you stop them?" demanded Mary, turning a flushed and frightened face toward her cousin. "Quick, run after them. Perhaps we can get them back before anybody knows;" and away ran Mary, closely followed by Millicent.

The horses had stopped to nibble the grass beside a little brook that flowed through the meadow.

"Don't run now, Millicent," whispered Mary, stopping suddenly and speaking in a whisper. "We'll creep close up to them, and get hold of their manes and lead them home."

This sounded very well indeed; but to lead one of those big horses by its mane seemed to Millicent fully as dangerous as to expect to lead home a roaring lion. But she did not want Mary to think that she was a coward. So she nodded her head, and crept quietly toward the feeding horses. But the horses did not intend to be caught, and as the little girls came near they were off, leaping the brook and going down the field at a swift canter.

Through the shallow stream raced Mary, quite regardless of white stockings and shining shoes, and after her panted Millicent. The clever horses allowed the little girls to come very near a number of times, and then off they went, and finally disappeared in the edge of the woods on the further side of the meadows.

"Now we can get them," declared Mary triumphantly, "and we'll ride home, for I'm tired to death."

"Let's rest," suggested Millicent, who was leaning against a big chestnut tree.

"Well, I guess we can," agreed Mary, "but not very long, or we'll be late for grandma's good dinner."

They sat down, and for the first time realized that their feet were wet and muddy, their stockings discolored and Millicent's dress torn.

Millicent was ready to cry. She wished that Mary Barclay had stayed in Dedham. If it was not for Mary, she thought bitterly, she would be sitting on the sofa beside Grandmother Barclay waiting for the fine birthday dinner. "For it is my birthday dinner. And there'll be a cake," she said aloud, and looked up ready to defend this assertion if Cousin Mary contradicted it.

But Mary was not there. She had vanished as completely as if she had been a dream. Millicent sprang up and looked behind the big chestnut tree. But Mary was not there. Then she called "Mary! Mary!" but there was no response.

CHAPTER II

SOLDIER FRANCIS

For a long time Millicent ran about among the big trees calling her cousin's name, but no answer came. She saw no trace of Mary, nor any sign of the brown horses. And at last, tired and unhappy, she resolved to go back to the house.

"I know I'm late for dinner, and I'm sure Mary went straight home without me," Millicent said aloud. "I didn't think she could be so mean. It's the horridest birthday I ever had," and Millicent choked back a sob.

There was no path among the big trees, but there was very little underbrush, and in a short time Millicent came out into an open space. At first she thought it was the meadow below Grandma Barclay's house, but as she looked she realized that it was a rough pasture that she had never before seen.

"There's the road!" she exclaimed, as she

realized that a road made its way across the pasture, very near to where she was standing. "Oh!" she again exclaimed, but this time in a low frightened voice; for coming slowly along the road were two English soldiers. They were on horseback, and in a moment Millicent realized that they had already seen her, and that it was too late to run back to the woods and hide. She quite forgot that she was far from home, that she had missed her birthday dinner, and that Mary had deserted her, in the surprise of seeing the soldiers.

As they came nearer they stopped their horses, and looked at her sharply. Then one of the men spoke to her. His voice had a friendly sound, and as Millicent looked up into his smiling face she no longer remembered her fears and smiled back at him.

"I'm lost. My Cousin Mary ran off, and I can't find her," she explained, feeling someway quite sure that this big man with the blue eyes would understand just how it happened.

"Well! Well!" he responded. "Now it is fortunate that we happened along, for we can take you home. That is, if you don't live too far away," and he was on the ground beside her

so quickly that it seemed to Millicent as if he had fallen straight off the horse.

"I'm visiting my Grandmother Barclay," Millicent explained. "That's why I'm lost. If I lived here I'd probably know where I was."

"Of course you would!" the blue-eyed man agreed promptly. "Now you will have to ride home sitting on my saddle," and he swung her up and then mounted behind her. "You need not be afraid, little miss," he said kindly, and then turning to the other soldier, who had not yet spoken, he said: "Do you know where the Barclays live, Johnson?"

"The rebel Barclay is a Dedham man, but I believe his mother lives somewhere about here," answered Johnson, who seemed to Millicent rather surly, and not well pleased at his friend's offer to take Millicent home.

"Uncle Barclay is not a rebel!" Millicent assured the English soldiers; "he is a loyal American, like Dr. Joseph Warren."

"'Tis the same thing," responded Johnson gruffly. "Mayhap your home is in Dedham, since you are a visitor at your grandmother's?" he continued.

"No, sir. My home is in Charles Town. I

am Millicent Austin," she replied, and all at once remembered her muddy boots, torn dress and untidy hair.

"We'll have to turn back to go to the Barclay place," continued Johnson; "'tis a good two miles from here, and the afternoon grows late. Had I not best keep on and tell the captain of your errand, Francis? For I doubt not you think you must see the child safely home."

Millicent could hardly believe it possible that it was late afternoon. She saw the soldier called Johnson ride on, and Francis turned his horse and told her that in a short time she would see her grandmother; while Millicent told him all about the excellent birthday dinner that she had missed. But she did not tell him about the two brown horses, which were now wandering in the open fields. It was not that Millicent remembered that Mary had told her the horses were to be sent to Dedham to save them from the British. If she had remembered the horses at all, she quite likely would have asked this kind man to try and find them and bring them back to her Grandmother Barclay's stable. But Millicent's thoughts were fixed

upon her own troubles, and her Cousin Mary's desertion.

By the time they reached the driveway leading to the Barclay house, however, Millicent became less unhappy. The big soldier hummed a gay little song now and then, and listened with great interest to what Millicent told him about Dicky and little Prue, about her own playhouse, a wonderful playhouse, the big soldier declared, since it was a "truly house" that her father had built for her among the wide-spreading branches of the big willow tree.

As they rode up toward the house Black Chris came running toward them. As he saw that it was an English soldier he stopped in the center of the roadway and shook his fist.

"You stop right there!" he called angrily, and then seeing Millicent, his angry expression softened. "Wher'd you find missy?" he demanded.

"Get out of the path," laughed the soldier; and leaving Chris to follow them he cantered on, stopping and swinging Millicent carefully down on the stone steps. "Good luck to you, little rebel. I know Charles Town, with its three hills; and maybe I'll be coming there

some day," he said, and quickly turning his horse, was speeding down the driveway, past the astonished Christopher, before Millicent had time to thank him for bringing her safely home.

"Millicent's come! Millicent's come!" she heard Mary calling, and turned toward the house to see her cousin on the steps just above her. "Millicent, why didn't you come home the way I did?" demanded Mary. "Grandmother Barclay is well vexed at you. And mind now, don't you tell her that *we* let the horses out of the stable. She thinks the English have stolen them. If you tell her we let them out she will never, n-e-v-e-r let us come here again."

As Mary talked she had taken hold of Millicent's arm and was helping her up the steps. "Here comes your mother now; don't you dare tell," warned Mary.

All at once Millicent began to feel very tired, and as her mother came toward her she began to cry.

"There, there, child; do not cry. You can tell mother all about it on the way home. Come in now and have your dinner. I have waited

to have mine with you; and your birthday cake is waiting," said Mrs. Austin, with her arm close about the little girl, as she led her into the house and up the broad stairs into the pleasant chamber that Millicent knew had been "mother's room" before Prudence Barclay became Mrs. Richard Austin.

"Here are clean stockings for you; some grandma knit on purpose for your birthday gift," continued Mrs. Austin, and in a little while Millicent was quite tidy again, her hair neatly brushed and braided, and the ugly tear in her dress "caught together," to be carefully darned at some future time.

"You should have come home with Mary, Millicent," Grandma Barclay said when Millicent came down to the dining-room, "but I will not scold you; and you must come again as soon as may be; for I have hardly seen you to-day, and your mother must start for home as soon as you have eaten your dinner and cut the cake."

Dicky and Prue, neat and smiling as when they left home that morning, and Mary Barclay, looking very demure and rather anxious, came into the dining-room to see Millicent cut the

birthday cake; and then Mrs. Austin hurried them out to the waiting chaise.

"We shall be fortunate to get to the ferry before sunset," said Mrs. Austin, as she bade her mother and Mary good-bye.

As Millicent lifted her face for Grandma Barclay's good-bye kiss she whispered: "I'm so sorry, grandma; I didn't mean——"

"There, there, dear child, do not trouble your little head. I'm only too glad the thieving Englishman brought you safely home. No doubt 'twas he who stole the horses," said grandma.

"No, no! He didn't——" declared Millicent, and in another moment would have told the whole story; but her mother drew her toward the chaise where Dicky and little Prue were waiting, and, almost before Millicent realized that they were really going, "Goldy" was trotting briskly down the driveway.

"The soldier didn't steal the horses, mother!" she repeated earnestly. "His name is Francis, and he is coming to Charles Town."

"Is he, indeed!" responded Mrs. Austin, in so sharp a tone that the children all looked at their mother wonderingly, for Mrs. Austin

seldom spoke sharply. "Well, Charles Town men will know how to welcome British soldiers when they come," she continued.

"Oh, dear," whimpered Millicent. "This has been a horrid day."

"So it has, dear child; lean your head back and rest. You are tired out," responded Mrs. Austin in a softer tone.

Millicent obeyed, and in a few moments she was fast asleep. She did not waken until they reached the Boston ferry. The sun was setting, and the Charles River shone and glistened, reflecting the glowing sky. Millicent listened sleepily to her mother's voice. Mrs. Austin was telling the ferryman of the day's adventures.

"'Tis a loss indeed," Millicent heard her mother say, "and we have no doubt that the man who stole the horses was the same soldier who overtook my little girl on the road and brought her home."

Millicent sat up quickly, her eyes wide open. "No, mother! No!" she said. "The soldier was kind. The horses ——" Then she stopped suddenly, remembering Mary's warning that if Grandma Barclay should know the true reason of the disappearance of the horses neither Milli-

cent nor Mary would ever again be visitors at Barclay house; and Millicent acknowledged to herself that there could be no greater misfortune than to give up the delight of such visits.

The ferryman smiled and nodded at Millicent's defense of her soldier friend.

"The English soldiers are not bad fellows; they do not war on children," he said pleasantly; "but 'tis not fair of King George to fill Boston with soldiers and close our harbor to make us yield to unjust taxes."

It was dusk when "Goldy" trotted into the home yard, and Mr. Austin came to help them from the chaise.

Millicent was so tired and sleepy that her father almost carried her to the house, and Dicky and Prue nodded over their bowls of bread and milk.

"It has been a day of worry and trouble," Millicent heard her mother say. "Mary and Millicent went off for a walk, and Millicent would not come back when her cousin wanted to. So Mary came home without her; and Millicent was brought home by an English soldier. We think 'tis the very one who stole the brown horses."

And again Millicent insisted, "He didn't! He didn't!"

But no attention was paid to her words. Mr. and Mrs. Austin thought it quite natural that Millicent should defend him because of his friendly act in giving her a ride home.

The little girl went up-stairs to her little room. From its window she could see the tall, slim steeple of the meeting-house in the market-place, and could look down among the branches of the big willow tree.

"'Tis all Mary Barclay's fault," she thought as she slipped into her bed; "and to think she should say that I would not come home, after she had run off and left me! And they are telling everybody that the soldier stole grandma's horses. And that's Mary's fault too."

But she was too tired to stay long awake; and she was a little comforted by the thought that the greater part of her birthday cake had been brought home and was safe in her mother's stone cake-jar in the cellar-way cupboard. But Millicent's last waking thought was that in some way she must let her Grandmother Barclay know that Soldier Francis had not stolen the horses. "Even if she never wants me to come there

again I must tell her," resolved Millicent. And then she thought of Dr. Warren, and remembered what her mother had said about loyal Americans. "I wonder if a little girl couldn't be one," she thought sleepily.

CHAPTER III

MILLICENT AT HOME

When Millicent awoke on the morning after the birthday visit her first thought was that she had dreamed about Soldier Francis, and that it was not true that she and Mary Barclay had really let loose Grandmother Barclay's brown horses. Then, suddenly, Millicent sat up straight in the little bed and exclaimed aloud: "It is; it is true—all of it. Oh, dear!" and was quite ready to cry, when her mother's cheerful voice sounded from the stairway: "What about the girl who was going to make crab-apple jelly to-day?" And at these words Millicent jumped out of bed, almost forgetting the troubles of her birthday; for Mrs. Austin had promised Millicent that she should make crab-apple jelly, and she was quite sure that it would be a very delightful day.

"I'll hurry, mother!" she called back, as she lifted the tall pitcher filled with fresh water, and turned it into the shallow bowl. As she washed

her face, and brushed and braided her hair, Millicent made a firm resolve: she would someway let Grandmother Barclay and everybody else know that the English soldier had not stolen the Barclay horses. "Even if grandmother never speaks to me again I must tell," she thought, as she ran down the stairs.

"Eight o'clock!" said Mrs. Austin, pretending to be very much surprised, "and the crab-apples dropping into the grass every minute. I have kept your porridge warm in the brick oven, and your milk is on the table," she continued.

"Dicky and Prue promised to pick up the apples," said Millicent, going toward the brick oven at the side of the big fireplace.

"Dicky and Prue are fast asleep," responded Mrs. Austin. "I think you were all very tired last night after so much excitement."

"Mother," and Millicent turned and looked up earnestly into her mother's face, "I don't like my Cousin Mary! I don't like her a single bit. She ran off and hid away from me; and when I was looking for her she ran for home as fast as she could go. And I was lost. And when I found the road there were two soldiers;

and Soldier Francis said he would bring me home, and he did. And the other soldier went on his way. They didn't steal grandmother's horses. They didn't!"

Mrs. Austin had listened quietly, and when Millicent finished she rested her hand gently on her little daughter's shoulder. "I am not surprised at what you tell me about your Cousin Mary. She is a mischief-loving child, and thinks not of the rights and well-being of others. But, Millicent, see to it that you speak no harm of Mary to your Grandmother Barclay, or to any person. It is not wise to tell any unkind thing of your own kindred."

"But, mother, mayn't I tell grandma ——" but Millicent could not finish, for her mother interrupted:

"No, dear child. Your being late to dinner was unfortunate, but your grandmother will not blame you overmuch; but should you go to her with tales of Mary's mischief 'twould begin all sorts of trouble, and do no good. I should not like you to be a tale-bearer ——"

"But Soldier Francis did not steal the horses," persisted the little girl.

"Then be very sure that it will be found out

that he is an honest, as well as a kind man," said Mrs. Austin, and at these words Millicent's face brightened. If her mother was sure that the soldier's honesty would be discovered, then, thought Millicent, all was well. Cousin Mary's mischief could take care of itself; and perhaps the brown horses were safe in the stable by this time.

"Mother, you are the best mother in all this world!" she declared happily. "You do say just the best things."

"Well, well, dear child, that's what all mothers do," responded Mrs. Austin smilingly; "now eat your porridge; and then you had better gather the apples without waiting for the twins."

"Yes, indeed I will," agreed Millicent. "I wish to-day was my birthday," she added, as she carried the steaming dish of porridge to the round table that stood between the two windows.

"We'll have your birthday 'last over' to-day, as we sometimes do with a plum pudding," said Mrs. Austin. "Sometimes we enjoy a pleasure that we haven't expected more than one that is planned for."

Millicent thought her porridge had never tasted so good, and she was just finishing when she heard little Prue calling, "Millicent," and hurried away to help her little brother and sister dress.

"It's my birthday to-day," she told them, "and we'll have a better time than we did yesterday."

"Oh—*we* had a lovely time yesterday," declared Dicky. "We played up attic, and grandma told us a fine story about a white goose that could talk; of course it was a fairy goose," he explained, as Millicent fastened the last button of his blouse.

"There! Prue is much smarter than you, Dicky," she said; "she has fastened all her own buttons, beside brushing her hair."

"Well, she hasn't talked," responded Dicky in a tone of great satisfaction. "Prue hasn't said a single word; but I've told you a lot of things, haven't I, Millicent?"

"Yes, Dicky," laughed Millicent. "Now come along to your porridge; and then you may help sister pick up the crab-apples and make jelly." And the three happy children scampered down the stairs.

After breakfast the twins started across the yard to gather up the tiny, hard red crab-apples. They each carried a basket, and in a very little while were back with the baskets filled.

"Mayn't we go and find father? We don't want to help make jelly," Dicky announced, as he put down his basket.

Mr. Austin was a boat-builder, and his yard was only a short distance from the house. This shipyard was a fascinating place for all the children, with its piles of sweet-smelling lumber, its litter of chips, and usually a partly finished boat on which their father was busily at work. Dicky had already announced that as soon as he was a man he should build himself a big ship, and go sailing off in it; "me and Prue," he would add, and Prue would solemnly nod her assent, as she did to everything that Dicky suggested.

"Go straight to the yard, children," cautioned Mrs. Austin, as she stepped to the doorway with them; "and if, for any reason, father isn't there, don't go hunting for him, but play about with the chips, and don't meddle with any of the tools."

Dicky promised, and Prue nodded smilingly

and away they ran, while Mrs. Austin returned to the kitchen where Millicent was busy cutting the little red apples into quarters, and neatly removing core and seeds.

The kitchen door stood wide open; and Millicent, when she looked up from her pleasant work, saw her little brother and sister hand in hand running along the well-trodden path which ran from the house down the slope to the river bank where their father built the boats. She looked up at her mother and said:

"This place isn't so big or fine as Grandmother Barclay's, but there's one thing splendid about it, and that is that Cousin Mary Barclay won't come here."

"Millicent! Mary is your own cousin. Don't speak of her again unless you can speak kindly; and as for Mary not coming here, she is quite likely to visit us."

"Well, she won't come in time to spoil my jelly. Have I cut up enough apples?" and Millicent pointed toward the tin pan heaped with the sliced fruit.

"I think so, for I cannot spare a great deal of sugar for jellies this season. With Boston Harbor closed to all our American vessels by

order of King George, I fear we may want for many things beside sugar," said Mrs. Austin. "Now turn your apples into the copper kettle and cover them with water and swing them over the fire," for the Austins used the fireplace and brick oven, as did many people in those days, to prepare their food.

Millicent watched the kettle carefully, now and then stirring the fruit with a long-handled spoon. After it had boiled up and the apples had become perfectly soft, Mrs. Austin lifted the kettle from the long iron crane and carried it to the shed.

"Are the jelly strainers all ready?" she asked.

"Yes, indeed," replied the delighted Millicent, holding up the two bags of cotton cloth.

Mrs. Austin set the kettle down on a rough table, and stood by while Millicent set a good-sized empty kettle on the table. Directly over this kettle were two stout hooks, fastened in the wall. Mrs. Austin now held open one of the bags while Millicent ladled the steaming fruit into it. When it was nearly full she twisted a stout cord around the top, fastened it, and then suspended the bag from the hook over the

empty kettle, so that the juice of the fruit would drip into the kettle. Then the second bag was filled and hung up.

Millicent stood watching the slow drip, drip. "I do wish it would come through quicker, mother. Can't I squeeze the bag?" she said.

"No, indeed!" Mrs. Austin answered. "If you should do that your jelly would cloud. No, you must just let it drip to-day. By to-morrow morning the juice will be ready to measure, with your sugar, and boil down. I hope you will have a good sunny day."

"Yes, indeed," replied Millicent, smoothing down her apron, and feeling very grown up indeed. She was quite sure that there were very few ten-year-old girls in Charles Town who could make crab-apple jelly; but it was very hard to have to wait a whole day before she could watch the pink juice boil away to a beautiful amber-colored, delightful tasting jelly.

"As this is your birthday you may do exactly as you wish, Millicent. Only, do not 'wish' to go to the market-place or the ferry," said Mrs. Austin, "for I do not want any of you children to go from home to-day."

"I'll go find the twins," said Millicent. "I

want Dicky to tell me the story about the fairy goose," and taking her sunbonnet from its hook behind the kitchen door, Millicent ran down the path, stopping before she reached the further side of the yard to look back and wave her hand to her mother who stood in the doorway looking after her.

As Millicent ran down the slope she could see the marshes of the Charles River shining in the September sun. She remembered how often she had heard her father say that the marshland was swampy and dangerous, and that she must never venture upon it. At high tide the waters of Boston Harbor crept up over the grass.

"I hope the twins remember what father tells us about the marshes," thought Millicent, as she came near to the lumber piles. She was walking more slowly now, quite sure that just beyond the lumber she would find Dicky and Prue, and wondering if her little brother would remember all of the wonderful story about the talking goose. She was thinking, too, that next week school would begin, and wondering if the new teacher would insist on the pupils learning a list of all the English kings, and their wonderful deeds, when suddenly the sound of

strange voices came to her ears, and for a moment she stood quite still. Then she laughed aloud, and ran around the pile of lumber, to find Dicky with both hands held to his mouth trumpet-fashion.

"Oh, Dicky! I thought for a minute that you were two strange men talking," she exclaimed.

"I am," responded the small boy soberly. "I was the British general in Boston, when you heard me, telling that soldier to bring back my grandma's horses."

"But he didn't take them, Dicky," said Millicent.

"Oh, yes, he did," insisted the small boy; and little Prue nodded her yellow head and repeated, "Oh, yes, he did," with great firmness.

"Tell me the story about the goose, Dicky," said Millicent with a little sigh, sitting down beside Prue.

"Well, there was a white goose, and it talked," Dicky began slowly. "It always knew when it was going to storm, and then it would hurry to the mistress of the house and tell her not to let her little children go out in the rain. And it knew when it was going to freeze, and it would

tell the master to cover up his garden. And it knew when enemies were coming, and it would tell that." Dicky stopped and looked at Millicent anxiously. "And then what do you s'pose happened?" he asked.

Millicent shook her head.

"Well, the goose lost its voice," he declared solemnly.

"What became of it?" asked Millicent.

"Oh, then it was just like all the other geese," said Dicky, "and all it could do was cackle. Let's play we were the soldiers who stole grandma's horses," he concluded suddenly.

"Dicky Austin! I tell you the soldiers didn't steal the horses," responded Millicent, wondering to herself why her small brother insisted in talking about Soldier Francis.

"I don't care!" said Dicky amiably; "but let's play something. Let's play I was the talking goose, and you be the mistress; and Prue can be just a cackly goose."

They had just begun this play when Millicent heard some one calling her name, and running around the pile of lumber saw her Cousin Mary Barclay coming across the field.

CHAPTER IV

MOLLY AND MILLY

"Oh, Mary Barclay! You told me that you were going back to Dedham to-day," exclaimed Millicent, standing still and looking at her cousin almost accusingly.

"You see I didn't go. I came to see you instead. And I'm to stay a week. Aren't you glad?" and Mary laughed a little mischievously, for she was quite sure that Millicent blamed her for all the troubles of the previous day. "Hullo, twinnies," she continued, turning toward Dicky and Prue, who, hand in hand, stood gazing at her with rather a serious look on their usually smiling faces. "Chris brought me. He had to carry a letter to General Gage about grandmother's horses, and I teased to be brought to Charles Town;" and now Mary did not seem to know what to say, for she looked down and began to kick at the chips.

The twins left the older girls and walked off across the field toward the house.

"I wish I hadn't come!" declared Mary, looking up with flushed face and troubled eyes. "How was I to know that you didn't know enough to go straight back to Grandma Barclay's? If you missed your dinner 'twas your own fault," and putting her arm across her face Mary began to cry bitterly, for she had really expected that her cousins would welcome her warmly, and rejoice that she was to stay a week; and now she wished herself back at Grandma Barclay's, or, better still, journeying happily with her father toward her Dedham home.

"Don't cry, Mary. Don't!" pleaded Millicent, remembering all that her mother had said to her about treating her cousin with kindness, and becoming all at once very sorry for Mary. "I was surprised, Mary, to see you. I do want you to stay, truly I do." And Millicent's arm was about her cousin's shoulder, and the two dark heads were very close together.

"But you blame me about yesterday, I know you do. You think I spoiled your birthday," sobbed Mary.

"Don't talk about it now, Mary. Mother said

my birthday could last over to-day, and it's fine to have you for company. And we'll have my birthday cake. You know I brought most of it home. Oh, Mary! I'll tell you what we'll do! We'll have the cake up in my playhouse in the willow tree."

"I've never seen your playhouse," said Mary, looking at her cousin, and wiping her eyes. "Let us go see it now."

"Yes, we will," Millicent agreed happily, and the cousins went across the field as good friends as if nothing had happened to disturb their cousinly affection. Millicent was anxious now to have Mary enjoy her visit. She tried to forget all that had happened at Grandma Barclay's, and only to remember that Mary was her guest.

"I began to make jelly this morning," she said proudly, as they walked along; "the apples are all cooked and the juice will be ready to boil down to-morrow morning."

"May I help?" Mary asked eagerly. "Oh, do let me, Millicent. I should so like to tell my mother that I can make jelly."

"Yes, we'll make it together," Millicent agreed amiably. "I wanted to squeeze the jelly-bags so the juice would drip more quickly, and then we

could have made it this afternoon ; but mother said 'twould cloud the jelly, so we must wait until to-morrow."

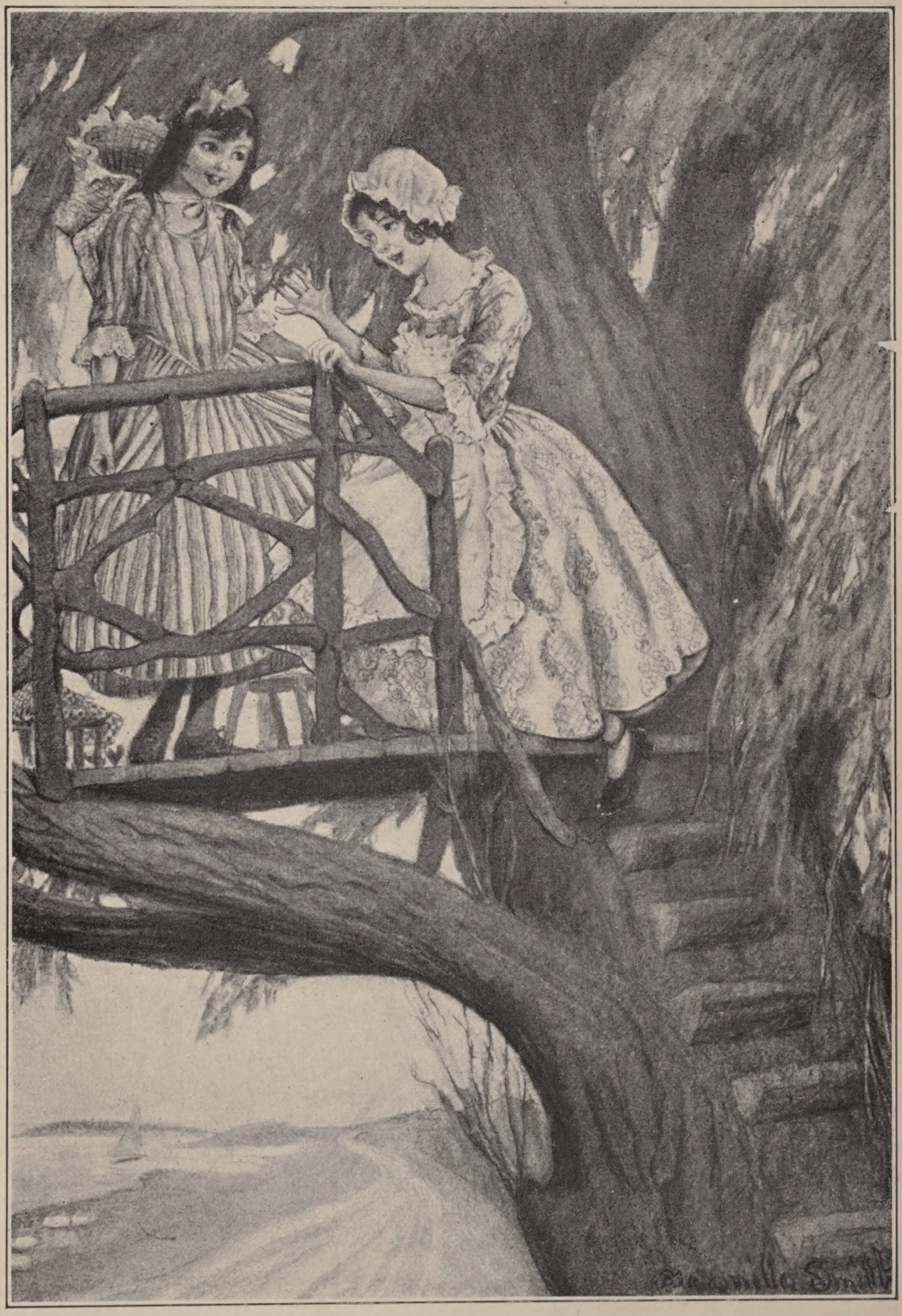
"And what if the jelly did cloud? 'Twould taste just as well ; and I think 'twould be rather a pretty change," responded Mary, her dark eyes sparkling with the idea of inventing a new jelly.

"Perhaps it would be well enough if 'twas clouded, but 'twill be fine to have it clear like mother's," said Millicent. "See, here are the steps to go up to my playhouse," and she stopped close by the big trunk of the willow tree.

Mary looked at the tree and then at Millicent. "Steps?" she said. "I don't see any steps."

"Look again," laughed Millicent, "or just follow me," and stepping close to the tree she reached up and took hold of one of the lower branches and then apparently was walking up the trunk of the tree to the firm little platform fastened between the big branches.

"Oh, I see. Isn't that a splendid idea?" said Mary quickly following her cousin. For the steps were simply little cleats cut from a stout bough of another willow tree, and nailed close



SHE STEPPED ON THE LITTLE PLATFORM

to the trunk. By holding close to the drooping branches one could go up easily, especially as the tree bent toward the gate, so it was not a straight upward line.

"Millicent Austin! I think this is lovely," Mary exclaimed as she stepped on the little platform. The rail about it was of the twisted branches of willow; and, while the playhouse could not be seen by any one passing along the road, the little girls could peer down through the branches on any passer-by.

There was a small table, and three stools, which Mr. Austin had made; and on one of the stools sat a very large rag doll wearing a sun-bonnet, and a little plaid shawl pinned over her dress of checked blue linen.

"See Caroline Rosalind!" exclaimed Millicent laughingly, picking up the big doll and holding it out toward her cousin, expecting that Mary would have a word of praise for this cherished possession.

"Oh! Do you play with dolls?" said Mary, endeavoring to look quite surprised. "It's really a long time since I thought about dolls. But of course I'm lots older than you are."

Millicent's smile faded; an angry rejoinder

was on her lips, but she remembered that Mary was her guest just in time to keep from speaking. But she held Caroline Rosalind very close, as if to protect her doll from any unkind criticism.

The little silence that fell between the two cousins was broken by Mary, who had stood looking upward among the thick branches of the tree.

"Milly, why don't you have another playhouse higher up, where those two big limbs branch out? 'Twould be splendid; just like an up-stairs room to this."

"So it would," agreed Millicent, looking up in the direction Mary pointed. "But father is too busy now to make another playhouse. He belongs to the Charles Town regiment, and when he is at home he has too much to do. Besides that, he says he may have to go away any day if the British soldiers do not behave."

"We could make it ourselves," said Mary. "All we'd need to do would be to put some boards across from one branch to the other. Of course we wouldn't make it so fine as this, with a railing, and all that. Oh, dear! There's your mother calling us now. Shall we have to go? If we keep still she won't know where we

are," and Mary's voice dropped to a whisper and she took hold of Millicent's arm as if to prevent her from answering her mother's call.

But Millicent called back, "We're in the tree, mother," in her loudest tone, and then, "Do you want us?"

"Yes. Come right up to the house," responded Mrs. Austin; and, putting Caroline Rosalind back on the stool, Millicent began to scramble down the tree to the ground. Mary followed, and both the girls ran toward the house.

Mrs. Austin stood in the doorway. She wore her sunbonnet and a neat little shawl over her shoulders, and her dress was of blue-checked linen. In one hand she carried a basket.

"Aunt Prudence looks just like your rag doll!" exclaimed Mary laughingly. "Sunbonnet, shawl and checked dress."

Mrs. Austin smiled, but her face flushed a little. She thought to herself that her little niece was not being very well brought up.

"I am going to the square, and Dicky and Prue are going with me. I want you girls to keep house. Your father has gone to Cambridge, Millicent, and will not be home until

evening; so we will have our dinner when I get back," and with a few words of caution to the girls Mrs. Austin, with Dicky and Prue trotting along beside her, started down the path to the road.

"Milly, why don't you call me 'Molly'? All the Dedham girls do," said Mary, as they stood in the doorway.

"All right," responded Millicent, "but 'Molly' and 'Milly' sounds rather silly."

The rhyming words made both the girls laugh, and Millicent again forgot that she had been so nearly angry at her cousin.

"Oh, Milly, I've thought of something to do while Aunt Prudence is away!" Molly exclaimed, clapping her hands together. "Let's finish making your jelly and surprise her. We'll have it all in the jars when she gets back."

"But mother said it was to drip until tomorrow morning," said Millicent.

"That's no matter!" declared Molly. "You said yourself that the only reason for that was to keep the jelly from clouding. 'Twill be just as good jelly; and to have it clouded will make it all the prettier."

Millicent hesitated a moment. Perhaps she would have refused Molly's suggestion; but her cousin gave a little scornful laugh and said: "Oh, I forgot. You don't know how to make jelly. Of course a little girl who plays with rag dolls can't make jelly."

"Mary Barclay! I don't see how you can be so hateful!" exclaimed Millicent angrily. "I do know how to make jelly. You just come and see if I don't," and she ran toward the shed, where the juice of the cooked fruit was dripping steadily into the pans.

Mary was close behind her.

"I'll squeeze this bag and you squeeze the other," said Mary eagerly, "and we'll have the juice all out in no time. I expect your mother will be proud as a queen when she comes home and finds you have made jelly all by yourself," she continued.

Milly made no response. She was thinking to herself that this birthday "lasting over" was not much better than yesterday. In a very few moments the juice was all in the pan.

"What do you do now?" asked Mary.

"I'll fetch the kettle and turn the juice in. Then we put in the sugar and boil it down to

jelly," replied Millicent, who had a little delight in telling Mary, who scorned dolls, how jelly was made.

"That's easy enough. And I don't believe it's going to cloud, either," said Mary.

Millicent ran to the kitchen and came hurrying back with the big kettle. Some of the juice was spilled in turning it in; but neither Milly nor Molly thought that it mattered very much.

"You want to put in lots of sugar, don't you?" asked Mary, as they carried the kettle to the fireplace and hung it over the smouldering fire.

"Mother said we must be careful of sugar," replied Milly; but nevertheless a good portion of Mrs. Austin's treasured sugar was put into the kettle.

"After it begins to boil I s'pose we ought to stir it every minute," suggested Mary.

Milly was not quite sure about this, but she did not want Molly to think that she did not know all about jelly-making; so she nodded her head and said: "Oh, yes, we'll have to stir it every minute."

So the long-handled spoon was brought from the closet, and when the juice began to bubble

and boil Mary stirred it vigorously. But it was warm work standing so near the fire on a sunny September day, and Mary soon handed the spoon to her cousin. "You stir now, and I'll run to the door and cool off," she said. So Millicent gladly took her place. Both girls were sure that the jelly would soon be ready to put in the jars that Mrs. Austin always filled each autumn. The jelly was kept for cases of illness, or as a special treat when visitors came.

Mary stood in the kitchen doorway a moment, and then stepped out and walked down to the willow tree. As she looked down the road she exclaimed aloud: "My goodness! There's Aunt Prudence now," and turning she ran swiftly back to the house. At the kitchen door she hesitated a moment, and then hurried on down the field toward the piles of board and the boat-building yard.

"I bet Miss Milly will catch it, and I don't care if she does; trying to show off about making jelly! She doesn't know how any more than I do," thought Mary, trying to justify her own mischief to herself, and really feeling a little ashamed when she thought of Milly stirring the boiling juice and sure of a scolding.

Dicky and Prue ran ahead of their mother and when they saw Milly standing over the kettle, spoon in hand, her face flushed and anxious, Dicky called out: "Goody! Millicent's getting dinner." At the sound of his voice Millicent gave a start of surprise and turned suddenly. She could never tell how she did it, but in a moment the kettle of steaming syrup was overturned and running over the hearthstone, and Millicent was screaming with pain; for a good portion of it poured over one of her feet and she could not speak or do anything but cry: "Mother! Mother! My foot! My foot!"

CHAPTER V

A DAY OF TROUBLE

"DICKY, bring the bowl of lard from the pantry shelf—quickly!" said Mrs. Austin, as she drew poor Millicent away from the hearth and seated her in the big chair near the table. It was fortunate for Millicent that her shoes were of good stout leather and not like the thin kid slippers that Mary wore; for the hot liquid had poured over her right foot, and, but for the good shoe, she would have been seriously burned. As it was her ankle and leg were scalded, and it was no easy matter to cut off her knit stocking.

"Be brave, dear child," said Mrs. Austin; "crying will not help," and Millicent choked back the sobs, as her mother covered the burns with lard and flour. "I'm afraid you cannot put on stockings and shoes this week; and 'twill be best for you to rest your feet on the footstool to-day. Is the pain better?" said Mrs. Austin, lifting Millicent to a more comfortable position, and putting the footstool close to the chair.

Millicent nodded, and looked up pleadingly into her mother's face. She wanted to say how sorry she was that she had tried to make the jelly and had wasted the sugar. For the moment she really forgot that it was Mary who had prompted the attempt, and remembered only her own fault; but somehow she could not speak. But Mrs. Austin seemed to understand, for she leaned over and kissed the little girl.

"Mother knows that you are sorry you didn't let the jelly-making wait until to-morrow," she said gently; "but where is Cousin Mary?"

"I don't know," Millicent almost wailed, for suddenly Mary's part in the unfortunate affair filled her thoughts, and made it all seem unbearably hard; for Mary had not got burned, she thought bitterly, nor was it Mary who had missed the birthday dinner at Grandma Barclay's. "I wish Mary was in Tophet!" she declared, recalling an expression she had heard her father use in speaking of the English soldiers encamped in Boston.

Mrs. Austin turned quickly away so that Millicent should not see that she was smiling.

"I'll slip on another dress before I begin to clear up this sticky mess," she said, looking at

the brick hearth where the half-cooked syrup lay in pools. There was not a drop in the overturned kettle. "And, Dicky, you and Prue run out in the yard and call Cousin Mary. Perhaps she is in the playhouse," she continued, as she started to go up-stairs to change her dress.

Dicky stopped a moment and looked at poor Millicent; then he ran to the big chair and reached up his chubby little brown hand and gently patted her flushed cheek. "I don't want to find Cousin Mary!" he declared. "What did she come for?"

"What did she come for?" repeated Prue soberly; for, in some way, the twins felt perfectly sure that all this trouble was the result of their Cousin Mary's visit.

A little smile crept over Millicent's face as she looked at the twins' sober faces; but it would not do for Dicky and Prue to think unkindly about a visitor, even if it was a troublesome cousin; she remembered that in time to say: "You must be polite to company; you know that, Dicky."

"Cousin Mary isn't company; she just came here," Dicky announced. "Company is folks you ask."

"Oh, no, Dicky. You must always treat people well who come to your house, even if you don't want them," said Millicent.

Dicky looked a little doubtful, but he remembered that sister Millicent was ten years old, and he would not be seven until January, so he supposed that she must know more about company than he did; and, nodding his head, he started for the door, closely followed by little Prue.

They were on the door-step when a big clumsy farm-horse with a red-headed boy on its back came galloping into the yard.

"Hullo, little girls," called the boy, swinging himself to the ground. "Where's your mother?"

"We are twins!" Prue announced suddenly, speaking before angry Dicky could think of a proper answer, "and Dicky's name is Richard Warren Austin."

"You don't say!" responded the boy. "Well, I can't bother with infants. Where's your mother?"

"Here I am, Sammy!" came a pleasant voice from the kitchen, and Mrs. Austin appeared at the door.

Sammy Crafts' good-natured face flushed; but he pulled off his faded cap, put his heels to-

gether and made his best bow as he said: "Mr. Austin sent me with a message, ma'am. He has had to carry a message to Reading, and will not be home until to-morrow."

Sammy Crafts lived on a farm near the Cambridge line, and was a schoolmate of Millicent's. He was a boy of fourteen, and was already known as the best drummer-boy in the neighborhood. He was resolved that he would go with his father's regiment if war really came; and he tried to carry himself in as straight and soldierly a fashion as possible; for, like all Massachusetts boys of that time, Sammy was quite sure that to be a defender of America's rights was the finest thing in the world.

"Thank you, Sammy; you must have a bit of dinner with us. Come in." So Sammy, closely followed by the twins, who had entirely forgotten Cousin Mary, came into the kitchen and heard about Millicent's accident, and told her of the new teacher. Dinner was all ready before any one remembered Mary.

"Goodness me!" exclaimed Mrs. Austin, springing up from the table; "if I didn't entirely forget your cousin. I will go call her," and leaving the children at the table she hurried

out of the kitchen and across the yard to the big tree, feeling quite sure that she would find Mary there. But no answer came to her call, so she went across the field to the boat-yard calling Mary's name, and looked anxiously about in search of her little niece. For a long time Mrs. Austin searched, and was returning to the house thoroughly frightened when she heard: "Aunt Prudence! Aunt Prudence!" and turned to find Mary right behind her.

"Oh, Aunt Prudence! I have had such fun following you. I was in the tree when you called, and I have been right behind you every step of the way!" and Mary laughed delightedly, as if quite sure that her aunt would think her a very clever little girl. But Mrs. Austin was thoroughly angry.

"Mary," she said quietly, "if Millicent had played such an ill-mannered and selfish trick on any one I should punish her severely; but you are our guest, and I will not punish you this time. But if you do not behave for the remainder of your visit I shall tell your father that you can never come here again. Dinner was all ready when I began searching for you, an hour ago."

When they reached the house Sammy had started for home, and Dicky and Prue were at the door watching for them.

"Why, Milly! What's happened? How's the jelly?" exclaimed Mary, as she saw Millicent's carefully wrapped foot.

"I upset it! All that sugar wasted!" responded Millicent, her face very sober, "and I guess 'twill be a long time before I get my shoe on again."

Mary's face grew as sober as her cousin's, and she had little appetite for her dinner, and hardly tasted the birthday cake.

"Mayn't I wash the dishes, Aunt Prudence?" she asked, as she rose from the table.

"Yes, Mary; I shall be glad of your help," Mrs. Austin responded.

The children went early to bed that night. Mary was to sleep in a small room that opened from Millicent's, and she helped Millicent prepare for bed. All the afternoon Mary had been very quiet, and Mrs. Austin and Millicent were both quite sure that she was feeling very sorry for the mischief she had caused; and Millicent had already forgiven her cousin, and was quite willing to be friends. She wanted very much to

ask about Grandmother Barclay's horses, and, just as Mary was saying good-night, she said:

"Mary, didn't grandmother get the horses back?"

Mary shook her head. "No, Milly; I've been wanting to tell you about it ever since I got here, but so much has happened. Now, don't you *ever* let grandma know that we let those horses out; for the English soldier, who brought you home, found them and Chris saw him going toward Boston with them. So she'll never know 'twas us. Grandma and father, too, are sure the soldier stole them; and she wrote a fine letter to General Gage asking him if his soldiers were to steal what they liked. Chris brought the letter this morning; that's how I happened to come."

Millicent had listened to her cousin's story with a despairing heart.

"What will General Gage do to the soldier if he believes the letter?" she asked.

"Father said very likely the general would be 'severe,' whatever that may be. For General Gage tries to keep his soldiers honest, father says," concluded Mary, starting for her own room.

"Oh, Molly, wait! Don't you see we've *got*

to tell?" pleaded Millicent. "At any rate, I've got to; for Soldier Francis turned back to bring me home when I was lost; when you ran off and left me ——"

"Don't you dare to tell," answered Mary, in a whisper, looking fearfully toward the door. "Milly, you mustn't tell," and Mary began to cry. "I don't know what father would say to me, after letting grandmother write the letter. Don't tell, Milly, don't!"

"Children," sounded Mrs. Austin's voice from the stairway, "not another word to-night. You'll keep Dicky and Prue awake," and Mary ran into her own room, leaving Millicent to lay looking out through her open window at the shining September stars. Before she went to sleep, however, Millicent had made up her mind that some way, some way without blaming Mary, she must rescue Soldier Francis from the disapproval of General Gage.

CHAPTER VI

MILLICENT'S HAPPY DAY

It was only a few days before Millicent's burns had healed, and she was again able to run about. During the time she was obliged to stay indoors there had been a severe storm. The great branches of the willow tree had thrashed and bent in the wind; the rain had dashed against the windows, and no neighbor had come near the house. And during these shut-in days Mary had proved herself a cheerful and entertaining guest. She had taught Dicky how to make "cat's cradle" with a bit of string on his fingers, a game of which it seemed that he and Prue would never tire; she had shown Millicent how to knit in a new way, keeping the yarn all in the control of the left hand, and using the knitting-needle in the right after the manner of a crochet-hook; and had been a real help to Mrs. Austin about the household work, so that when Black Christopher drove into the

yard on the first pleasant day, saying that he had come to take Missie Mary back to her grandmother's, the Austin family were rather sorry to see her go, and had quite forgotten her mischievous tricks.

"What about Mrs. Barclay's horses, Christopher?" Mr. Austin asked, as he helped Mary into the wagon.

"We ain't got 'em yet, sir; but General Gage has writ missus that he's looking into the matter. He writ that Soldier Francis, who fetched the horses to camp, said as how he found 'em loose in de road! He! He!" and the old darky laughed scornfully; "and the general writ if the soldier did go in the stable and take 'em they should be sent back and the soldier punished."

"A poor excuse indeed," said Mr. Austin, not noticing the frightened look that Mary turned toward Millicent.

Mary leaned down from the wagon. "Milly, don't you tell! You know what!" she said, as Chris tightened the reins and drove down the yard.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Austin paid any heed to Mary's words. The children often had harm-

less secrets, so they gave no thought to this. Black Christopher had brought news that the British were fortifying Boston Neck, the narrow strip of land over which the road led to Roxbury. No more produce was to be allowed to enter Boston, and the Austins knew that meant even harder times for the loyal citizens. But to Millicent it meant that the way to get to Roxbury and tell Grandmother Barclay the truth about the lost horses would be even more difficult. Not quite the whole truth, the little girl said to herself, for she had decided to take all the blame and to say that she let the horses out, and not to mention Mary's name.

"I almost wish I had sent you and the children back with Christopher," Mr. Austin said to his wife as they turned back to the house. "For your mother will soon see the wisdom of going to Dedham, and would take you with her. Neither Roxbury nor Charles Town will be safe much longer," he concluded.

"Well, we must not frighten the children. See Millicent's anxious face," responded Mrs. Austin, looking down at her little girl. "Run along with your father, dear child; he is going to Mr. Crafts' and you'll like the ride."

Millicent's face brightened and she ran indoors to put on her sunbonnet. Mrs. Austin pinned her own shawl about the little girl's shoulders, for the day was cool, with a touch of the coming winter in the air.

"I must try to manage a warm coat for the child," Mrs. Austin said to herself as she watched the chaise drive away.

"Mother! Oh, mother!" called Dicky, and Mrs. Austin turned to see the twins racing up from the direction of the boat-yard.

"Oh, mother! Soldiers are taking away all father's boards an' everything!" called Dicky. "Come tell them to stop," for Dicky was quite sure that no one would disobey his mother. For a moment Mrs. Austin felt as if she must indeed do as Dicky said, for it would be a serious loss to the little family.

"Come here, children," she said; "mother cannot prevent the soldiers taking away the boat and the boards. 'Twill be good fortune if they do not come to the house."

"I told them to stop," exclaimed Dicky, "and they wouldn't. An' one of the men said 'twould be a good plan to duck me in the water."

"An' Dicky told the man he das'n't duck

him in the water! An' all the men laughed," said Prue, making almost the longest speech of her life.

"I am truly glad your father is away," said Mrs. Austin, leading the twins back to the house. "We will not go near the boat-yard to-day, children."

While this was happening Millicent and her father were riding along the pleasant country road toward Cambridge.

"Perhaps we'll find Sammy Crafts practicing on that fine drum of his," said Mr. Austin, smiling down at his little daughter. "Let me see," he continued; "wasn't it Millicent Austin who wanted to learn to play a drum?"

A little smile crept over Millicent's face. "Yes; but that was when I wasn't much older than little Prue; but I guess I'd like to try now. If Sammy Crafts can play so well I know I could play a little," responded Millicent.

"Of course you could," agreed Mr. Austin, "and very likely Sammy will let you use the drumsticks to-day. He is a good-natured boy."

"Oh, father, do you suppose he will?" exclaimed Millicent, straightening herself unconsciously, and for the moment forgetting all

about Soldier Francis. For Millicent had always wanted, almost more than anything else, to have a drum of her own, and to play some of the gay little marches which seemed to make soldiers step out so bravely, and to give all who heard the drum beats a feeling of safety and courage.

"Couldn't 'Goldy' go faster, father?" urged Millicent, who could now hardly wait to reach the Crafts farm.

"Of course she could," laughed Mr. Austin, with a word to the pretty sorrel horse which quickened her pace. Millicent's father had noticed her sober face ever since her visit to Roxbury, and was glad to see her interested and happy again. He thought to himself that if Sammy Crafts would part with one of the treasured drums that Millicent should have it.

The Crafts farm bordered on the Charles River, and the low gray farmhouse was guarded by two elm trees. In summer time the front door was garlanded by a creeping woodbine and a climbing rose, but now only the crimsoning leaves and reddening rose-haws remained. As they stopped at the gate the front door opened and Mrs. Crafts came out to welcome them. When-

ever Millicent saw Mrs. Crafts she was always reminded of the red-cheeked winter apples; for Mrs. Crafts' pleasant face was round, her cheeks were red, her black eyes small and bright, and it seemed to Millicent that she was always smiling. Her eldest son was with the American Army, as were so many Charles Town boys, and she often said that it was the finest thing in the world for a young man to be willing to defend his country.

"Well, Mr. Austin, I am glad indeed that you brought Millicent," she said. "Come right in, dear child; and, Mr. Austin, just drive to the stable. Mr. Crafts and Sammy are both there," and taking Millicent's hand she led her through the little square entry to the big living-room. "Take your bonnet and shawl right off," she said cordially.

For a moment Millicent stood quite still just inside the room, for on the broad settle rested three drums. One was small, "just right for me," the little girl thought; the other two were larger; they seemed to Millicent large enough to send a whole regiment marching along to their music.

"Oh, you're looking at Sammy's drums," said

Mrs. Crafts smilingly. "He has been at work on them this very morning; and I declare if I don't do most of my housework to a quick-step or a march," and the little woman laughed aloud. "It's 'rat-a-tat-tat' most of the time in this house."

"It must be splendid," said Millicent eagerly; "do you suppose Sammy will play for me?"

"Indeed he will. He says he doesn't want to go to school next week because 'twill give him no time for practice. But I told him the rest of the family could bear that," and Mrs. Crafts laughed again. "Now if I had a little girl like you, Millicent, there would be dolls on that settle instead of drums."

"Oh! But I like drums," said Millicent, looking down admiringly on Sammy's treasured possessions.

"Hullo, Milly!" sounded a pleased voice, and she turned to see Sammy standing in the door that opened from the kitchen. He came politely forward and shook hands with their little visitor, and said that he was glad to see her. Then he picked up one of the larger of the drums and adjusted the strap around his neck. "I'm going out to the barn to practice," he said.

"Oh! mayn't I go and hear you play?" pleaded Millicent.

A delighted smile came over Sammy's freckled face. "I guess so. Mayn't she, mother?" he responded.

"Of course you may," agreed Mrs. Crafts, almost as pleased as Sammy himself; "and why don't you let Millicent take that little drum? Perhaps she would like to play too."

"Could I?" and the delight in Millicent's face made Sammy quite forget that he never allowed any of his playmates to touch the drums. He lifted the smaller drum and put the strap carefully about Millicent's shoulders, and then handed her two drumsticks.

"There you are! The drummer girl from Charles Town," he said gaily. "Now come on out and let your father see you. Just tap a bit with one stick and then the other on the drum as we go out. 'Twill make your father smile," and the two children went happily off toward the stable.

"If that don't beat all!" declared the smiling Mrs. Crafts as she stepped to the door and watched them cross the yard. "I never knew Sammy to let any child touch those drums before."

"Hold the sticks this way," directed Sammy, showing Millicent the proper way to hold a drumstick. "Don't hold it so tight; and you don't have to strike the drum hard. This way," and Sammy beat a quick measure on his own drum, which Millicent at once tried to imitate.

"Try again," laughed Sammy, and Millicent did try, not once, but over and over again, until Mr. Crafts and her father came to the stable door to see what all the drumming was about.

"Milly's a born drummer," declared Sammy admiringly. "I'll bet she could play a march in no time."

"But 'no time' wouldn't do for a drummer," his father said laughingly.

Sammy did not often find any one who was as willing to be taught as Millicent; and before Mr. Austin was ready to start for home the little girl could really beat out a marching measure on the drum.

"If you'd practice every day you'd soon play," Sammy assured her, "and I tell you what I'll do; I'll lend you that drum if you want it."

"Oh! Will you, Sammy? I was wishing and wishing I dared ask you to. I'll be just as careful," responded Millicent.

"Keep it in a dry place, and don't put it on the floor," cautioned Sammy. "I'm coming over to your house to-morrow to get a load of boards your father has sold us, and I'll teach you more about the march."

"Thank you, Sammy. I s'pose some day you'll play the drum in the army," said Milly, a little wistfully.

Sammy nodded. "I reckon I will," he answered. "If the enemy attack Charles Town I may get a chance," and his voice sounded very much as if he hoped the enemy would attack Charles Town.

Mr. Austin was nearly as pleased as Millicent herself at the loan of the drum. "I will have to hunt up my old flute," he said, as he put the drum, carefully wrapped, under the seat of the chaise.

"Come again, Milly," said Mrs. Crafts, coming down to the gate to say good-bye, "and here's a sweet cake for you to take home to the twins."

Both Millicent and her father thanked the smiling little woman, and drove off in the best of spirits. Millicent was happier than she had been for a long time. "I am going to play the

drum! I am really going to play the drum!" she said to herself over and over again.

"I've had such a splendid time, father," she said happily, as Goldy trotted off at a good pace toward home.

"It has been a good day all around," responded Mr. Austin cheerfully. "Mr. Crafts was as glad to take my lumber as I am to sell it. To tell the truth I've been afraid the British would get their hands on it before this."

"Can you really play the flute, father?" questioned Millicent.

"I used to think I could. And I have a very good flute, too. It came from Italy. My Uncle Thomas brought it to me when I was a lad about Sammy's age; and he taught me to play it. 'Tis in the top drawer of the high-boy. I'll get it out to-night and show you how a march really ought to go," said Mr. Austin, smiling down at Millicent's eager, interested face. "We'll have a band right in the family."

"Oh, dear! It's all clouding up," exclaimed Millicent. "I hope it isn't going to rain to-morrow."

"Only a shower," said Mr. Austin; "'twill be fair skies by sunset."

But they reached home before the shower began, so that the precious drum was safely under cover before the first drop fell. Before Milly could explain what the wonderful bundle really contained, Dicky had begun the story about the stolen boards. Mr. Austin came in before it was finished, so Dicky had to begin all over again.

"An' Dicky told the soldier-man he das'n't duck him in the water! An' all the soldier-men laughed," added little Prue, soberly.

CHAPTER VII

A GREAT ADVENTURE

MILLICENT was so eager to show Dicky and Prue that she could really play on the drum that she gave but little attention to what her father had to say at the loss of everything of value in the boat-yard. But at supper time she forgot the drum when her mother said:

"I see no chance of mother ever getting back her horses. Of course General Gage will stick to the story that the soldier found them running loose."

"Even so, your mother can easily prove that the horses belong to her; but, as you say, I doubt if she ever sees them again. But General Gage cannot believe the man's story. Of course he stole them," replied Mr. Austin.

"He didn't steal them. I let them out," Millicent declared suddenly. "It's just as Soldier Francis said: he did find them loose in the road! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" and Millicent put her head down on the table and began to cry.

"What do you mean, Millicent?" asked Mr. Austin. "Stop crying," and Millicent had never heard her father's voice sound so stern. "Do you mean to tell me that you let your grandmother's horses loose purposely?"

"Yes; Mary and I were going to ride horseback; but they ran away; and we ran and ran after them, but we couldn't catch them; and then I got lost and Soldier Francis brought me home," replied Millicent, talking so fast that she hardly realized that she had spoken her cousin's name.

"'Tis more of Mary's mischief, I'll be bound," declared Mrs. Austin. "I remember that she called back to Millicent 'not to tell.' I'll wager 'twas Mary who led Milly into the trouble, and then came home in time for dinner herself," and Mrs. Austin reached over and smoothed her little girl's hair so tenderly that Millicent began to feel comforted.

But Mr. Austin's face was still grave. "I do not know what Mary may have to do with it, but Millicent tells us that she let out her grandmother's horses. And, worse than that, she has let all this time go by and said nothing about it. I do not know how to set the matter straight,"

and Mr. Austin got up from the table and began walking up and down the room. "Go to bed, Millicent. I will talk with you in the morning," he said, not looking toward the unhappy little girl.

Millicent went toward the stairway, and in a moment her mother was beside her. "I'll go up with you, dear," she said, and Millicent began to feel, as she always did, that mother understood all about it, and knew how sorry she was for the trouble.

When Millicent was in bed Mrs. Austin asked, "Why did you not tell us this before, Millicent?"

"I didn't dare to," confessed Milly. "Can't father go and tell General Gage about it, and ask him to let grandma have her horses?"

Mrs. Austin shook her head. "'Tis not wise for an American soldier to go to the general with such a story. 'Twould be laughed at; even though it cleared one of their men from horse-stealing. I fear that Soldier Francis has had some trouble through you, as well as your grandma," she answered. "But we will not talk about it now, Millicent. Wait and hear what father says in the morning. Mother is glad

you have told us," and kissing Milly's flushed cheek she said "Good-night," and Millicent was alone.

Millicent could hear the murmur of voices from the kitchen, and knew that her father and mother were talking over what she had told them. She knew now exactly what she must do. She must go to Boston and tell General Gage all that had happened, and ask him to let Grandma Barclay have the horses back again. "I mus'n't wait another day. I must go to-morrow morning," she resolved.

Millicent did not sleep much that night. She was awake long before daylight, and when she heard the kitchen clock strike three she slipped out of bed and began to dress. Holding her stout shoes in one hand, she crept quietly down the stairs to the kitchen and put them on there. The morning air was sharp, and the little girl shivered as she cautiously closed the door behind her and stood on the door-step. She had pinned a little shawl over her shoulders, but was bare-headed.

Millicent's first thought was to cross the ferry over which her mother had taken her on the visit to Roxbury; so she started along the road

in the dusky shadows of the early morning. Looking up she could see the stars still shining; and the road seemed like a gray ribbon leading off into darkness. As she walked quickly along she thought to herself that her father and mother, Soldier Francis and Grandmother Barclay, would all be glad when they knew that she had told General Gage the truth; and she began to feel less unhappy, and to think again of her drum. "I'll get home before Sammy Crafts gets there," she assured herself.

When she reached the square the darkness had faded, and here and there people were taking down shutters, or sweeping off door-steps. Millicent began to feel tired, and when a whiff of the fragrance of bacon or steaming porridge came through an open door, she realized that she was hungry. But now she was nearing the ferry, and once over the ferry she was sure that she could soon accomplish her errand and then hurry home.

But there was no one at the ferry. The larger boats were pulled well up on the shore, and no small boat was in sight. It was too early for passengers. Millicent stood on the shore and looked across the river. She could see the

"Lively," a British ship, at anchor in the channel; and, as she stood wondering what she could do, a boat put off from the ship and came directly toward the Charles Town shore. Millicent watched it eagerly. As it came nearer she saw that it held no passengers beside the man who was rowing. As he sprang from the boat and drew it up out of reach of the tide he called out:

"Well, what's a small girl like yourself doing here at this hour of the morning?"

"I want to cross to Boston," Millicent responded promptly, for the man was smiling and she did not feel at all frightened of him, even if he did belong to the English ship.

"Important business, I suppose?" said the man.

"Yes, indeed," Millicent replied. "I want to see General Gage just as quick as I can."

At the mention of the name of the commander of the English troops the man's smile disappeared, and he looked more closely at the queer little figure.

"A message, may be?" he questioned; for it was a time when important messages were being sent, and he thought it possible some loyal Tory

was sending news to Boston by this little girl. He did not stop to ask more questions, but pushed the boat back into the water.

"Jump in. I'll set you across," he said, and Milly promptly obeyed. "Just do me a good turn, will you, little miss?" the sailor said as they drew near the Boston side. "Tell the general that 'twas Jerry O'Neil who fetched you from Charles Town."

"Yes, indeed I will," said Millicent; and she jumped out on the wharf at the Boston side, and stood watching the sailor rowing swiftly back to Charles Town.

"'Tis a good morning's work I've done," Jerry said to himself; "like as not General Gage will reward me for it. But 'tis a pity to send a small girl like that with messages."

Millicent stood for a moment looking back at the Charles Town shore, with Bunker Hill rising above the quiet village, and for a moment wished herself at home. Then she remembered her errand, and turned and walked slowly up the wharf. The Old North Church was close by, and she wandered through Salem Street wondering how she should find General Gage. As she turned into Hanover Street two

red-coated soldiers passed her. Millicent looked at them closely. "Soldier Francis! Soldier Francis!" she called, and ran after them.

"And what is this?" exclaimed the tall soldier, looking down at the bareheaded little girl. "I declare 'tis the little Roxbury maid! Are you lost again?" he asked laughingly. The other soldier had walked on, and Millicent, holding close to the hand of Soldier Francis, told him her errand.

"I told them you didn't steal the horses; that I let them out, but I did not tell soon enough," she explained hurriedly. "I hope General Gage did not punish you?"

"And so you journeyed from Charles Town to tell the general that Soldier Francis is an honest man, eh?" the big man questioned smilingly. "Well, the general believed my story, so there's no harm done that way. But those two brown horses?" and the soldier's face grew serious. "Well, well! Perhaps the general will send them back if you ask him to. He's but too easy with favors to these Boston folk. Did you have your breakfast?" he concluded sharply.

"Oh, no! I wish I had," Millicent answered.

"Come along with me then," said Soldier

Francis. "I'm having a bite at a tavern near here, and I'll like well to see a small maid eating her porridge." And hand in hand the big English soldier and the little American girl walked down Hanover Street.

It seemed to Millicent that nothing more wonderful would ever happen to her than that breakfast with Soldier Francis. She had never before been inside an inn, and the long narrow room with its dresser filled with shining pewter, the glowing fire at one end where two men with big white aprons were busy preparing breakfast, all seemed very queer to her.

"Sit here by the window," said the soldier; "you shall have some good porridge in no time," and, after a word to one of the white-aproned men, they were soon served with porridge and bacon, and a cup of milk for Millicent.

It was still so early in the morning that only a few people entered the inn. Some of these looked sharply at the little girl eating her breakfast with the soldier, but no one spoke to Millicent or her companion, and when they had finished Millicent said: "It was a splendid breakfast; I'm much obliged," so soberly that Soldier Francis smiled more broadly than ever.

"I don't think much of it myself, but I've eaten many worse," he responded; "and now we'll walk toward the Common, and it may be we can manage a message to the general. But you should have worn your hat and your best gown, little maid," he added kindly, looking down at Millicent's bare head and faded linen dress.

Millicent flushed uncomfortably; and, for the first time, realized that she was a very untidy-looking little girl.

"I didn't think!" she answered in a low voice, looking down at her dusty shoes. "Perhaps you'd rather walk ahead. I can keep close behind. Then nobody will know I belong to you," and she drew her hand from the soldier's.

"Bless me! Do you think me such a poor sort as all that? I did but speak of what the great general expects; he likes people who visit him to wear their best. Now, I have some extra shillings in my pocket this morning, and I'd like nothing better than to buy you a hat!" responded the good-natured man. "I have seen ribbons and such in a window on King Street."

"I guess my father wouldn't want you to," Millicent answered, a little regretfully, suddenly

remembering that Soldier Francis was a British soldier.

The man laughed and said no more, and in a few moments they were standing in front of the window in King Street and Milly was looking admiringly at rolls of gay-colored ribbons, and big hats of soft felt and velvet.

"I wish you were an American soldier," said Millicent, looking up into the friendly smiling face.

"Oh, ho! So that is why you do not want the hat? Well, we'll say no more about the hat," he answered, "and I'll tell you a secret! I like not fighting against men in their own homes—men who have not hurt or wished to hurt my own country. Were I not in the king's service, I'd well like to make my home in this town."

Millicent had hardly heard what he was saying; for, coming down King Street, was a little procession of finely dressed officers.

"Look! Look!" she exclaimed eagerly, pulling at the skirt of Soldier Francis's coat; the soldier turned quickly, and with a sudden exclamation pulled off his cap.

"'Tis General Gage himself," he declared.

CHAPTER VIII

"JONGLEURS"

"I HAD no thought of what the little maid meant to do," declared Soldier Francis, when he told his messmates that night of what had happened when Millicent saw the English general and several of his officers coming down King Street.

For, almost at the moment of Millicent's seeing them, she had stepped off the narrow sidewalk and ran up the street before Soldier Francis could stop her.

"Why! Who is this?" said General Gage, as he found himself confronted by an untidy little girl, bareheaded and wearing a small woolen shawl pinned over her shoulders.

"Get out of the way, Miss Ragamuffin!" commanded one of the young officers, stepping in front of the general and taking Millicent by the arm.

"Don't touch the child, Lincoln," exclaimed

his superior officer sharply, for Millicent had spoken his name appealingly, and General Gage was always ready to listen to children.

Indeed, his English followers declared that he was too ready to listen to any American. He had hoped to avert open war, but he was beginning to realize that the men of Massachusetts were not cowards.

"Have you a message for me?" he asked, looking down kindly at the little girl.

"Yes, sir," faltered Millicent. "I want to tell you that Soldier Francis did not steal my Grandma Barclay's brown horses. I let them loose. He did find them, just as he said. Will you please send them back to my grandmother in Roxbury so that she can go to Dedham?" and Millicent, quite out of breath, looked up pleadingly into the grave, kind face of the general. Soldier Francis, still cap in hand, stood just behind Millicent.

"And do you live in Roxbury, little maid?" asked the general, and Millicent told him her name, adding:

"I live in Charles Town, on the road beyond Bunker Hill; and some of your soldiers took my father's boat and all his boards."

At this the officers exchanged smiles and nods. But General Gage did not smile. His face was very grave. A little crowd of people were gathering, and Boston people were not friendly to these undesired guests, who had encamped on the Common, and whose ships lay at anchor in Boston Harbor, a daily reminder of the English king's threat to deprive them of their rights. The general walked on with Millicent beside him.

"Shall I send the child home, sir?" questioned one of the young officers.

"'Twill be as well," replied the general. "Tell Soldier Francis to take her safely to the Charles Town shore," and then he turned again to Millicent. "You are an honest little maid to confess your mischief and to clear a soldier's good name," he said pleasantly. "You must tell your grandmother that her horses will be returned to her if her family are loyal people and not rebels."

Millicent no longer looked up at the English general, but stood silent and unhappy. She heard the general speak to Soldier Francis and then suddenly she remembered the sailor from the "Lively," and said: "I meant to tell you

that Jerry O'Neil brought me over the ferry." At this several officers laughed aloud, and General Gage smiled.

"Come, little maid," said Soldier Francis, and Millicent found herself walking away from the great general who had crossed the seas from England to Boston to make the colonies yield to King George's demands.

Neither Soldier Francis nor Millicent had much to say on their walk to the ferry. An English sailor at the wharf offered to set them across, and they were nearly at the Charles Town shore before Soldier Francis said: "You've been wonderful brave, little maid, to take all this trouble to tell the truth; and I thank you for proving me an honest man. It may be I can some time do a good turn for you."

Millicent looked up quickly and a little smile brightened her face. "I was thinking my coming was of no use," she said.

"'Twas a fine thing to do," declared the soldier. "'Twill be something to remember that a little American girl was bound to tell the truth, though 'twas but to clear an English soldier."

"'Tis easier to tell General Gage than it will

be to tell my grandmother," said Milly, as she stepped ashore.

"You will find your way now in safety?" questioned the soldier.

"Yes, indeed," answered Milly, and bade her friend good-bye, and started along the familiar road which would lead her through the square and to her home.

The midday sun was very warm, and it was not long before Millicent began to feel very tired and sleepy. As she reached the foot of Bunker Hill she left the road and sat down to rest in the shade of a big beech tree. She leaned back against the tree and closed her eyes, and in a moment she was asleep. It was several hours later when she awoke. Some one was saying: "Millicent Austin! Millicent Austin! Wake up!" and there was Sammy Crafts standing in front of her. "Well, you've scared your folks pretty well," he declared, looking down at her. "What made you run off?"

"I didn't," responded Millicent. "I just stopped to rest and I went to sleep."

"You'd better come home. Guess you're hungry?" said Sammy. "Come on; your father's searching toward Cambridge, and was

going to get the neighbors to help look for you. Reckon he thought some of those English 'lobster-backs' had stolen you."

The American boys thought "lobster-backs" expressed their scorn of the red-coated English soldiers.

"Oh, dear!" said Milly, standing up and leaning against the friendly tree. "I'm so tired I don't know as I can walk home."

"Come on," insisted Sammy; "'tain't more'n a mile to your house. Wish I'd brought my drum along, then you wouldn't think about anything only just keeping step."

"I forgot all about the drum," said Millicent.

It was a very tired little girl who walked slowly up the path toward her mother who stood in the kitchen door waiting for her. Mrs. Austin put her arm about Millicent and drew her into the pleasant room without a word.

"Oh, mother," said Millicent, "I'm so sorry about grandma's horses."

"And was that why you started off, leaving us to be so frightened? Oh, Millicent!" responded her mother.

"I found her asleep at the foot of Bunker Hill," declared Sammy, who stood in the

kitchen door. "Guess I'll put off and find Mr. Austin," he added, and Millicent and her mother were alone.

"I've been to Boston," said Milly, a little faintly, for she was really almost too tired to speak. She was sitting in the big rocking-chair, and as she leaned back she closed her eyes, and gave a long sigh of satisfaction.

But Mrs. Austin looked at her in alarm. She was quite sure that Millicent had not been to Boston, for the ferryman had declared that no little girl had crossed that morning; so when Millicent began the story of her adventure her mother was quite sure that her little daughter was seriously ill and did not know what she was saying.

"And I had breakfast with Soldier Francis, and I told General Gage about letting the brown horses loose," went on Millicent, her eyes still closed and speaking in a tired voice.

"Yes, yes, dear child. Now you are safe at home, and so tired that you want to go to bed. And I have some nice warm gruel all ready for you, and a piece of warm corn bread," and Millicent opened her eyes as her mother spoke, and owned that she was hungry.

She ate the bread and gruel hungrily. "I had porridge at the inn, and that's all I've had," she said. "Where's Dicky and Prue?"

"They are playing about in the boat-yard. You'd best go right to bed," said Mrs. Austin.

As Millicent went slowly up the stairs she went on with the story of the wonderful day. "I s'pose I ought to be tired for I got up when the kitchen clock struck three. Jerry O'Neil set me across the ferry, and I told General Gage ——"

"Don't talk any more now," said Mrs. Austin, again fearing that her little daughter did not realize what she was saying; and Millicent was quite willing to let her mother help her prepare for bed, although 'twas not yet dusk. She was fast asleep before her mother tiptoed carefully from the room.

"Perhaps she really did go to Boston," said Mr. Austin as he listened to his wife's story. "And it is not unlikely that she may have spoken with General Gage. We will not worry about her until to-morrow morning; if she sleeps through the night and has the same story to tell we can be sure that she has not dreamed it."

Millicent slept late the next morning, and when she came down-stairs she wondered why her mother and father looked at her so closely. She ate her breakfast alone, and then, after a few questions from her father, the entire story of her yesterday's adventures was recounted. When Millicent repeated what Soldier Francis had said to her of her courage in telling the truth she noticed that her father's face grew less serious, and a little smile crept about his lips.

Then there was a little talk with her father that Millicent was always to remember; and when it was over she was sure that she would not again follow Mary or any one else into mischief.

"I do wish I had told mother and grandmother right off," she said earnestly. But, some way, Millicent could not be sorry that she had journeyed to Boston; and neither her father nor mother had blamed her overmuch for they understood Millicent's desire to set right the mischief she had helped to do.

"Milly, play on the drum," demanded Dicky, running into the room.

But there was work for Millicent to do this morning. School was to begin on Monday, and

this was Friday, and Mrs. Austin reminded Millicent that there was an apron to make before Monday morning; and in a little time Milly was sitting in her own little chair near the pleasant western window busily at work with her needle.

"'Tis the best of good fortune that we have a good store of linen cloth," said her mother, "for the English will not let us make or buy anything. I could wish we were as well provided with wool. But by another year perhaps all this worry and trouble will be over, and the English soldiers back in their own country."

Millicent did not really hear all that her mother was saying, for her thoughts were with her wonderful journey to Boston, the kindness of Soldier Francis and the pleasant words of General Gage.

"Why do we hate the English, mother?" she asked suddenly.

"Gracious sakes, child! We are English ourselves! We do not hate the English. 'Tis the wicked government that would make slaves of Americans that we rebel against," declared her mother; "and, Millicent, think no more about all this matter of soldiers and trouble. When

you have finished your seam take the drum Sammy lent you and go out to the shed with Dicky and Prue;" for it seemed to Mrs. Austin that her little daughter was too much interested in the worry and trouble which shadowed every American in 1774.

Millicent's face brightened, and she worked busily on, setting every stitch as neatly and finely as possible. When the seam was ended she fastened her thread carefully, folded her work and put it away, and then ran to the closet for the drum. In a few moments the gay "rat-a-tat-tat" was heard from the shed, and Dicky and Prue came running to see and hear Millicent play the drum.

Mr. Austin came up from the boat-yard with a wheelbarrow load of chips for fuel, all that was left of value. As he stood at the shed door he nodded his head approvingly. "Millicent has a sense of rhythm and time," he said aloud.

"Oh, father, won't you get your flute now?" said Millicent.

"Not now; wait until after supper to-night. And you children can take the wood-basket and fill it with these chips," he responded. So Millicent put the drum on the bench, and with the

help of Dicky and Prue had soon emptied the basket.

"Father, mayn't I play on the flute?" asked Millicent, as her father came back to the shed.

Mr. Austin looked at her smilingly. "Well, well, so you want to be a 'Jongleur,' do you?" he questioned.

"I don't know what a 'Jongleur' is," replied Millicent.

"A 'Jongleur' is a person who can play on a number of musical instruments; and, besides that, can invent amusing games to please people. He can sometimes imitate the songs of birds and the calls of wild animals," explained her father.

Millicent danced about the shed in delight. "That's splendid! I'll be a 'Jongleur,'" she declared happily. "Oh, father, why didn't you ever tell us about 'Jongleurs' before?"

"I'll be it, too! Me and Prue," announced Dicky.

"Well, Dicky, you have made a start with your rhyme," replied Mr. Austin, "for Jongleurs often are clever rhymesters."

Millicent had the drum strap over her shoulders again, and, holding the sticks exactly as

Sammy had directed, she beat out the first measure of a march.

"I'll have the flute all ready this evening," Mr. Austin promised, as he went back to his work, leaving the children making plans to learn to play drum, flute, and perhaps the violin, and eager for the evening to arrive that they might hear their father play.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

When Mr. Austin played the first notes upon his flute that evening the children looked at each other with smiles of delight. It seemed a very wonderful thing to them that their father could really play on a flute. Dicky and Prue were to sit up until eight o'clock that evening, and they were full of eager questions about drums, and flutes, and "Jongleurs." The word "Jongleur" seemed to please Dicky very much. He kept saying it over and over until Milly declared that he sang it.

Mr. Austin told them that Frederick the Great, of Prussia, played the flute; and that in Sparta in olden times the choruses in public celebrations were led by the flute; and in Greece flute playing was a part of the education of all the youths.

"Now, Millicent, I think I can help you get the right time for 'The Cadet's March,'" said

Mr. Austin, and for a little time Millicent and her father practiced together on drum and flute. It was one of the happiest evenings that the little family had known for some time. Mrs. Austin watched the others with smiling eyes, her hands busy with her knitting; for at that time all the stockings and warm mittens for a family had to be made at home, and the mother of a family had her knitting ready for the times of "leisure."

When the clock struck eight Mr. Austin put down the flute, and Mrs. Austin rolled up her knitting. Little Prue was already half asleep, but Dicky pleaded for one more tune.

"Go to bed, Dicky. To-morrow I'll let you try a tune on the flute yourself," said his father, and this promise sent the boy happily off to bed.

Millicent, with her mother's help, had already written a letter to Grandma Barclay telling her own part in letting the horses loose. Although she did not mention her Cousin Mary's name she was sure that her grandmother would realize that Mary had a part in the mischief. Millicent told the story of her journey to Boston, and of what General Gage had said; and ended her letter by saying: "I am afraid the brown

horses will never come back to Roxbury, dear grandma, and I hope you will forgive me for letting them out, and for not telling you when I could not catch them."

Mr. Austin promised to find some way to forward the letter; but it was a difficult matter to get letters through Boston. Millicent was now happier than she had been for weeks. She had done all that she could to undo the mischief that her Cousin Mary had led her into, and the fact that her mother and father knew all about it helped to make it seem less dreadful than when it was her own secret.

The twins were to begin school on the opening of the autumn term, the following Monday. And as Millicent walked down the road with Dicky firmly grasping her right hand and little Prue clinging to her left, she felt that she was really the "grown up" sister.

Dicky carried the basket of luncheon; for the schoolhouse was nearly a mile distant from their home, and it would be growing dusk before they would return.

"I wish the teacher would let us bring the flute and drum to school," said Dicky as they marched along.

"Perhaps she will some day," responded Milly encouragingly.

It was a long day for little Prue, and she was glad when it was time to start for home. She had never kept still so long in all her life, and she was quite sure that she did not like school. But Dicky declared that he had had a fine time. At recess a boy had shown him a wonderful game.

"You have a pointed stick, and you hold it in your right hand, then you throw up an apple with your left hand and catch it with the stick," he explained to Millicent, as they walked toward home.

"That would be a good trick for a 'Jongleur,' wouldn't it, Dicky?" responded Millicent laughingly. "You know father said that they had to invent games."

"So he did!" agreed Dicky enthusiastically. "I wish father would let me take the flute to school to show the boys."

"Wait until you can play a tune on it," said Millicent, "and then perhaps he will."

Dicky agreed that the boys would probably have a better opinion of him if he could really play a tune on the flute, and now he was as

eager to practice on the flute as Millicent on Sammy Crafts' drum. Every night the kitchen echoed to their attempts to play "The Cadet's March," and it was not many weeks before their father owned that he really "knew what they were trying to play."

The autumn was warm and pleasant that year. The first snow-storm did not come until December. After that Mrs. Austin thought it best for little Prue to stay at home; but Dicky went sturdily off to school each morning with Millicent.

"It may be that the English soldiers will cross the river before long," Millicent heard her father say one cold December morning just as she and Dicky were starting for school, "and then there'll be no more school for months to come."

Millicent thought to herself that it would be a great pity if school should have to be given up just when it was so very interesting. For Miss Martin, the teacher, had listened to Dicky's story of "Jongleurs" with great attention, and had said that she thought it would be a fine thing if each of her scholars could play some musical instrument. Miss Martin could play

on the guitar herself, as all the children knew, and she had promised them that on the last day of the term she would bring the guitar and play for them. When Dicky told her that he and Millicent could play "The Cadet's March" on the flute and drum Miss Martin looked at her young pupils with evident surprise.

"Why, then, we will have a regular concert on the closing day," she declared. "We will have songs with choruses by all the pupils; and Dicky and Millicent shall play their march." So now Dicky and Millicent practiced more than ever; and as the days grew shorter and their father was more at home, Mr. Austin would often take the flute and show Millicent and Dicky just how to place their lips, and the position in which to hold the flute.

"'Twould be a good idea if Miss Martin should close school on December 16th," Mr. Austin said one evening after the usual practice on the flute. "The days are far too short now for school; and the sixteenth is the first anniversary of the day when the 'Dartmouth's' cargo of tea was emptied into Boston Harbor. Dr. Warren is to give an address in Boston that day to remind the citizens; and 'twould be

well for Charles Town children to have a celebration in their school that they may not forget the courage and patriotism of their fathers."

"Why, that's the day school *will* close," exclaimed Millicent; "but we did not remember about the tea."

"'Twas a tea party that the world will remember whenever America is spoken of," said her mother, "and I'm glad school is to close so soon," she added, "for 'tis near dark when the children get home."

The sixteenth was a clear, bright winter's day, and the little schoolroom was snug and warm. Miss Martin and some of the older children had cut boughs of spruce and pine and fastened them over the windows and door. The concert was to be early in the afternoon, and a number of the parents were coming; there was a pleasant little air of excitement all the morning, and when the afternoon session opened and visitors began to arrive in high-backed sleighs or on foot the children were all smiling at each other and eager for the opening chorus; and when the Reverend John Martin entered and the children all rose to bow in response to

his greeting, Millicent felt that this was a far more important occasion than speaking to General Gage in Boston.

The minister commended the little assembly to the divine care, and then, after the little stillness which followed his words, Sammy Crafts appeared in the doorway with his drum. Sammy had not been a pupil this term, and his coming was a surprise to all except to Miss Martin, who had arranged for him to take a part in the exercises.

Standing just inside the door Sammy did not seem to see any of his schoolmates until he had politely bowed to Mr. Martin and the other guests, and to the schoolmistress. Then he faced the school and bowed again. There was a little murmur of approval among the visitors, and his mother flushed happily as she listened to the praise of her neighbors at the good manners of her son. Instantly Sammy's drumsticks beat out the "Call to Arms." Then came a gay "Rat-tat," which set the feet of the listeners keeping time unconsciously; and then Sammy had made his bow again, and taken his seat beside his mother.

And now at a word from Miss Martin the

pupils were all on their feet again and their voices rang out in the old hymn :

> " All people that on earth do dwell,
> Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
> Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell,
> Come ye before Him and rejoice."

Many of the visitors joined in singing the hymn that English people had sung for over a hundred years.

Miss Martin now played a tinkling serenade on the guitar, and, before any one could applaud, nodded smilingly at Dicky, who sat on the very front seat, and announced that: " Miss Millicent and Master Richard Warren Austin would play 'The Cadet's March' on the drum and flute," and the brother and sister came forward and, in their turn, made their bows to the minister, the guests, and to Miss Martin and the school. Dicky, endeavoring to bow exactly as he had seen Sammy Crafts do, nearly lost his balance, and straightened himself with a very flushed face. For a moment Dicky wished that he had never seen or heard of a flute, and was tempted to run to where his mother sat; but the tap, tap of Millicent's drumsticks gave him

courage and lifting the flute to his mouth he forgot everything else except the delight of making music.

"Well done indeed, my boy," declared Mr. Martin. "May you some day cheer brave soldiers on to protect the rights of America."

"Yes, sir," stammered Dicky.

No one commended Millicent, though she had played the drum with spirit. In fact there had been doubtful looks among the visitors at the sight of a girl with a drum.

"I guess you needn't feel very proud," whispered Polly Danforth, a seat-mate; "girls don't play drums."

Millicent wished that Miss Martin was not looking at her, for she wanted to make up a face at Polly Danforth and to whisper back, "Tory!" for it was well known among the children that Polly's father was not a loyal American. Then the minister talked to the pupils, and asked how many of them remembered what had happened in Boston on the 16th of December in 1773. Millicent was the only one who raised her hand; and now Mr. Martin smiled approvingly upon her and said: "So it is our little drummer girl who remembers.

Tell us, then, what happened," and Millicent said:

"'Tis a year since the 'Dartmouth's' cargo of tea was emptied into Boston Harbor, because Americans would not pay unjust tribute to England;" and now there was a murmur of approbation and applause.

"Just for remembering that," thought Millicent. "'Twas a lot harder to learn to play a march on the drum." Nevertheless she was glad that the little gathering had approved of her, and she smiled triumphantly toward Polly Danforth when she sat down.

The short December afternoon was fading into dusk when the pupils and visitors started for their homes. There were streaks of gold and crimson in the western sky, and the air had grown milder.

"More snow coming," declared Sammy Crafts, endeavoring to look very wise and grown up as he put his drum into a stout case he had made for it. "Say, Milly, you played first-rate," he added, "and you may keep that drum if you want to."

"Truly? Forever?" questioned Millicent, hardly able to believe such good fortune.

"Sure, forever," responded Sammy, and so Milly started for home a very happy little girl.

It happened that none of the neighbors were going toward the Austin farm, so Mrs. Austin, with little Prue holding fast to her mother's hand, Millicent and Dicky started off toward home without other company. Mr. Austin was in Boston, where he had gone to listen to Dr. Warren's address.

"Mayn't I play the march for us to march home?" asked Millicent, and Mrs. Austin smilingly agreed. Millicent never knew that the beat of her drum fell on the ears of a little party of English officers who were riding from Charles Town ferry toward Cambridge, and who drew rein on the same road over which the little family were walking toward their home.

"Can it be that the Yankees are marching toward Boston?" one of the English horsemen asked, stopping his horse and turning to one of his red-coated companions.

"It sounds like it. 'Tis the march they play everywhere," declared the other. "We'd better turn back before they get sight of us, since we are but three, and know not the number of the enemy," and turn back they did, and galloped

quickly to the ferry, and hurried to their commanding officer with news that the Charles Town people were ready to march to Boston to drive out the English troops.

As Millicent reached the gate under the big willow she gave a resounding "Rat, tat! Rat, tat, tat, tat," which fell so clearly on the ears of the retreating soldiers that they sent their horses along more swiftly, quite sure that the enemy was close upon them.

"It's been a pleasant day, surely," said Mrs. Austin, as they entered the house, "but I fear 'twill be a long time before the neighbors again gather with peace and safety."

"Nobody seemed to like my playing the drum, nobody but Miss Martin; she said that I played well," said Millicent, a little despondently.

"And so you did, dear child. The neighbors were surprised, I doubt not, that a girl should play the drum; yet I am sure they thought you did well," responded her mother.

"Could a girl ever help America by playing a drum?" asked Millicent, thinking of all Sammy Crafts had said of the courage of drummer boys whose music cheered the soldiers on to victory.

"It might be," replied Mrs. Austin; "girls and women should always be ready to help; and who knows but you may help by playing your drum?"

Millicent's face brightened. "It would be fine if I could help, wouldn't it, mother?" she said eagerly.

CHAPTER X

"BLACKY"

THAT night Millicent was awakened by a queer wailing cry. For a moment she thought it must be that little Prue, who slept in a trundle-bed in Millicent's room, was ill; but before Millicent was really awake the cry came again, and she realized that it was outside the house, directly under the window of her room. It was a pitiful sound, and in a moment Millicent had run to the frost-covered window and was endeavoring to peer out.

"Oh, I can't see a thing," she whispered to herself, and ran shivering back to bed. But the noise did not stop, and Millicent could not sleep, so she slipped on her shoes and dress and groped her way down the stairs.

"Mother and father are sound asleep," she thought. "I'll just see what the noise is." As she opened the outside door a little dark figure came crawling along toward her. The night

was clear and bright, and Milly could see that it was a small dog. "Oh, he hasn't but three feet," she exclaimed aloud, and at that moment she heard her father's step in the kitchen and in a moment Mr. Austin, a lighted candle in hand, was beside her. "It's a little dog, father!" she exclaimed pitifully.

The little creature seemed hardly able to get itself up the step, and Mr. Austin, handing the candle to Millicent, picked it up.

"Run into the kitchen, Milly," he said, and followed her holding the dog carefully.

The kitchen fire, carefully covered by ashes, was still alive, and the room was warm.

"It's a little spaniel, and it has evidently been caught in a trap and got free from it. Too bad, little dog," and Mr. Austin tenderly examined the crushed paw.

"No wonder he cried," said Millicent.

"I'm afraid the little chap has had a hard time. Put on the kettle, Milly, and heat some water so I can bathe his paw and fix him up; and set some milk to warm on the hearth."

Millicent obeyed; the little dog lay on Mr. Austin's knees as if satisfied that he had found a friend. Now and then he would give a little

whine of suffering, but his dark eyes seemed to plead for patience.

"What soft pretty ears!" Millicent said admiringly.

"Don't touch him, dear. He wouldn't mean to hurt you, but just now he is in pain and might snap," said her father; so Millicent stood looking down at the shivering little dog.

"May we keep him, father?" she asked.

"Of course we may, until we find who owns him," responded her father.

The little dog lapped up the warm milk gratefully, and let Mr. Austin bathe and bandage the hurt paw with only little whimpers of pain, and Mr. Austin fixed a comfortable bed for him in the chimney-corner.

"Now go to bed, child," he said to Milly. "Our visitor will rest nicely here. Don't wake mother or the twins when you go up-stairs."

"I'm glad he came to our house, father," whispered Millicent, and with a last look at the little dog started up the stairs. "I think traps are horrid," she decided, as she slipped back into her comfortable bed. "If it hadn't caught this little dog, it would have caught some little wild fox with nobody to help it," and Millicent re-

solved to tell Dicky never, never to set a trap for any wild creature.

The little dog seemed half afraid of his new friends the next morning; but it did not take him long to find out that he was a very welcome guest. It was evident that he had been without food for some time, and he ate eagerly, and seemed content to lie near the fire, wagging his tail and watching the children.

He was a black spaniel; and though his coat was now rough and dirty, Mr. Austin said that when the little dog had been well fed and cared for he would have a fine silky fur.

Dicky could not keep far away from the spaniel. He sat down on the hearth close beside the dog, and very soon was smoothing the dark head. It was quite evident that the boy and dog understood each other.

"He must have a name," said Millicent.

"Let's call him 'Blacky,'" said Dicky promptly. "See! He knows we're talking about him, don't you, Blacky?" and so the little dog was named.

"He's my dog, isn't he, mother? I found him," said Millicent, when Blacky began to hobble about the room, holding up his bandaged

paw in so careful a manner that they all laughed to see him.

"Yes, he's Milly's dog," agreed Dicky, who was always ready to agree with whatever his elder sister said; and as little Prue was ready to agree with Dicky, Blacky became Millicent's especial property. It was several weeks before the little dog was in good condition, and the crushed paw was never quite right. Blacky would always limp a bit; but he got about very well with his three good legs and was a bright and good-natured companion.

"The last of the sugar, and no more to be had," Mrs. Austin declared one January morning, as she held up a half-filled sugar-bowl; "and only a little wheat flour left," she added.

"And I wasted all that sugar," exclaimed Milly, remembering the overturned kettle of syrup, and how Mary had urged and led her on to the unfortunate jelly-making.

"I'm glad our supply of wood is holding out," said Mr. Austin; "a good many of our neighbors are getting their wood from the good people of Lexington. To-morrow sleds are expected from Reading, and the citizens mean to give them a rousing welcome."

"Mayn't I go up to the square to see the sleds come in?" asked Millicent.

"Yes, you may go with me," agreed Mr. Austin. "Mr. Crafts and Sammy are going to call for me, and there'll be room to take you along. The sleds are expected about noon."

Milly had a knitted hood of red yarn and warm mittens, and Mrs. Austin had made her a warm coat of a heavy blue woolen blanket; for it was no longer possible for the Charles Town people to get necessary supplies either of food or clothing; and Mrs. Austin, like all the residents of the town, had to make use of what material she had, and do without many comforts.

When Mr. Crafts and Sammy drove up the next morning on their way to the square, Milly and her father were all ready.

"Oh, Sammy has his drum!" Millicent exclaimed.

"Yes; we're going to give the Lexington and Reading sleds the best welcome we can," replied Mr. Crafts. "Put your flute in your pocket, Austin. They are bringing us wood and corn and potatoes to help us through these times, until we can make England see that we can take care of ourselves; so Charles Town means to give

Lexington and Reading neighbors a fitting welcome."

Mr. Austin ran back to the house for his flute, and Mr. Crafts tucked the warm robes about Millicent.

"Millicent can play 'The Cadet's March' as well as I can," suggested Sammy, but his father did not seem to hear.

"I couldn't; not in the square!" Milly hastened to say.

"Of course not, Sammy! The idea," and Mr. Crafts looked at his son reprovingly. "'Tis not fitting that a little maid should play a drum in public. 'Tis well enough at school," he added; so no more was said about Millicent's drum.

Blacky followed Milly to the gate, and Sammy asked eagerly if any one had claimed him. "If you don't want to keep him I'll take him," Sammy said hopefully.

"We want to keep Blacky; don't we, father?" Milly responded confidently.

"I suppose we do, now he's made himself so much at home," replied Mr. Austin. "But I must say I can't understand where the little fellow came from. I don't believe he was well

treated in his former home or he would have found his way back."

"Look, Milly! There are some boys coasting on Bunker Hill," said Sammy, pointing his mittened hand to the steep slope round which the road curved. Milly looked at the flying sleds, and resolved to herself to have a coast down that same slope before many days.

Mr. Crafts and Mr. Austin were talking of the entertainment to be given at Captain Adams' tavern to the generous neighbors from Lexington and Reading. The square was already full of people, and Mr. Crafts left Milly and her father with Sammy in front of the church, and drove off to find stabling for his horse.

"Give us a tune on the drum, Sammy," called another boy, but Sammy shook his head.

"There they come! There they come!" shouted a voice in the crowd; and a little group of horsemen could be seen down the road. These were members of the Charles Town Militia who had been sent out to escort the sleds into town.

"Now, Sammy Crafts, uncover that drum and be ready with a good measure," commanded a tall soldierly-looking man standing near by.

"Yes, sir," responded the boy readily; and as

the heavily loaded sleighs swung into the market-place it was Sammy Crafts' drum that bade them welcome, and which led the cheers of the people.

On one of the sleds was hoisted the Union flag, and on its center in big letters was inscribed:

"*To the Worthy Inhabitants of Boston and Charles Town:*

"Ye noble patriots! Constant, firm and true,
Your country's safety much depends on you.
In patient suffering greatly persevere,
From cold, from famine, you have naught to fear.
With tender eye the country views your wo,
With your distress will her assistance grow:
Or if, which Heaven avert, some fatal hour
Should force you from your homes by tyrant power,
To her retire: with open generous heart
All needful aid and comfort she'll impart:
Gladly she'll share the wealth by heaven bestown
With those, for her, who've sacrificed their own."

Millicent read the lines as the big flag, held firmly by tall slender poles, went slowly by. So intent was she upon the words that she had not noticed a little black figure bounding along by the roadside until a sharp bark and a tug on her coat made her look down.

"Oh, Blacky! What made you come?" she exclaimed. The movement of the crowd had swept her some little distance from Sammy, and her father had left her a few moments earlier to go with other citizens to welcome the Reading and Lexington men, so when Blacky reached Millicent she was surrounded by people who were strangers to her.

The little dog was quite sure that his little mistress must be glad to see him; and Millicent picked him up and held him in her arms for fear he would be hurt in the crowd, while Blacky tried to tell her as well as he could that he had run all the way so as to take care of her.

The sleds had passed on, followed by the crowd, and Millicent found herself alone, at some little distance from the church. From further up the square she could hear the beat of a drum, and was sure that Sammy had forgotten all about her, and she began to feel glad of Blacky's company. She put the little dog down, and he ran along beside her.

"I wonder where my father is?" thought Millicent, almost wishing herself at home in the warm pleasant kitchen, where her mother and the twins would now be eating their dinner, and

suddenly she resolved to go home. "It's not much over a mile, and I'd rather walk than stand here," she thought, a little unhappily, for all the music and people, and the pleasant excitement seemed to have drifted away from her. At that moment she heard her name called loudly, and turned to see Sammy Crafts running down the road toward her.

"Millicent, I say! I was scared. I thought I'd lost you. Come on back to Captain Adams. You are to play 'The Cadet's March' on my drum. Captain Adams wants you to, and your father says you may. Come on," and Millicent, with Blacky close at her heels, was hurried up the road to the pleasant tavern where the entertainment for the visitors was to be held.

"I don't believe I can," she faltered. But when her father took her by the hand and told Mrs. Adams that this was his little "drummer girl," Millicent no longer felt afraid.

"I'll play with you, Milly," Mr. Austin said, as he unfastened her coat; and Mrs. Adams bade her come and warm her hands and feet at the glowing fire in a sunny upper chamber.

"And you shall have some nice hot broth before going down-stairs, my dear," said the

friendly landlady; "and after all the speeches and music are over you and I will have a comfortable dinner by ourselves. And the little dog shall have a bite, too."

When Millicent, with Sammy's fine drum swung over her shoulders, entered the big room of the inn where the guests and their hosts were gathered, she looked up at her father with a little frightened expression; but his whispered "Play your best, Millicent," made her forget everything except that her father would be disappointed if she failed; and she had never played so well. Intent on her drum Millicent did not notice that Blacky was close beside her, and that at the first note of the flute he had raised himself on his hind feet, and, as if imitating a soldier, was pacing in time to the music. But the murmur of laughter and applause made the little girl look up from her drum, and there was Blacky in front of her as if waiting for her approval.

So it was Blacky who was the star of the entertainment. Every one had a word of praise for the clever little dog; and Millicent was sure that he was the finest dog in America. But Millicent had her share of praise too, and it was

THE STAR OF THE ENTERTAINMENT

a very happy little girl who sat down at the round table with Mrs. Adams, with a fine dinner spread before them.

"And Mr. Blacky shall have a chair beside you," declared Mrs. Adams. So Blacky was near enough to accept such bits of roast chicken as were offered him. For there was chicken, and sliced ham and jelly, and round frosted cakes. And when they had quite finished, and Millicent's father came to say that Mr. Crafts was ready to start for home, Mrs. Adams carefully wrapped up a package of the cakes for Millicent to take home to Dicky and little Prue.

Blacky promptly jumped into the sleigh and curled himself up at Millicent's feet.

"He knows that he has earned a ride home, the clever creature," said Mr. Crafts. "It has been a great day for these young people," he added smiling at Milly's happy face, "and I reckon they'll remember it."

CHAPTER XI

A SLED AND A BIRD

When Dicky heard of Blacky's part in the entertainment he insisted that Milly and their father should play, so that he and little Prue could see Blacky march to the music. But, to everybody's surprise, the little dog did not seem to take any notice of the music.

"Perhaps if we both stand up, side by side, and mother and Dicky and Prue sit in a row 'twill make Blacky remember," suggested Milly.

"Perhaps it will. I believe the little dog is a trick dog, one who has been taught to do tricks," replied Mr. Austin. As Millicent and her father stood up as if facing an audience Blacky immediately took his place in front of them as he had done at the tavern; and, to the delight of Dicky and Prue, marched and countermarched in time to the music.

"Oh, Blacky! What else can you do?" demanded Dicky, and Blacky cocked his silky

head knowingly, and stood as if waiting for some familiar command, and then, in a second, he was balancing himself cleverly on his head. After this he walked on his hind legs around the little circle, holding out his right paw, the poor crushed little paw, as if to shake hands.

If the children had admired their new friend before they now regarded him as the most remarkable dog that had ever been known.

"Do you suppose he belongs to some of the English in Boston, and followed them to Charles Town?" Mrs. Austin asked her husband.

"It may be. But Blacky seems to like his new home better than his old," replied Mr. Austin; and, as time went on, and no one claimed the little creature, the Austin children regarded Blacky as a member of the family.

"It's lucky for you children that I had put a few boards in the shed before the English visited our boat-yard," said Mr. Austin, a few days after the discovery of Blacky's accomplishments. "I have been meaning to make you a sled; and here is a good stormy day for the work."

"Mayn't I help?" asked Dicky.

"Of course you may. You can steady the

boards for me to saw, and you can sandpaper the strips of ash for the runners; for I do not know any way to get good steel runners for it, and ash makes a very fair runner," replied his father, and Dicky went happily off to the shed, while little Prue contented herself with the company of Caroline Rosalind; for Millicent had told her that Caroline Rosalind could "visit Aunt Prue" all day. To be called "Aunt Prue" and to have the big rag doll for a visitor was delight enough for the little girl, and she was quite satisfied to be parted from Dicky for an hour or two.

"Mother, I saw children sliding on Bunker Hill the other day," Millicent said, as she helped her mother with the household work. "Mayn't I go over there to-morrow? Our sled will be finished to-night."

"'Tis too far from home; and the slope of the field back of the house will give you a good coast," replied her mother; and then, seeing the look of disappointment on her little daughter's face, added: "It may be you can go some day with Sammy Crafts; but say nothing about it to Dicky, for 'tis too far for him."

Millicent nodded happily. She had never

had a sled of her own, and was looking forward eagerly to seeing the "Reindeer," as she had already named the sled her father was at work on.

In the afternoon the sun came out and the snow stopped falling. The sled was finished before night—a strong, well-made sled, with its ash runners, and smooth curved seat. The children all looked at it admiringly, and, although it was nearly dusk, their father said they could have one slide down the field.

"The runners will go better after using," he said, and Milly tied on her red hood, put on her coat and mittens, and tucking little Prue up on the sled, she and Dicky drew her across the yard to where the field began to slope down to the boat-yard. There was a good crust under the newly fallen snow and, with Dicky in front holding the sled-ropes, Prue tucked snugly in behind him, and Milly on back, ready to steer with her heels, the sled went swiftly down the hill.

"It's the best slide I ever had!" Millicent declared happily. "What is it, Dicky?" she concluded, for Dicky was standing with his head bent a little, as if listening, and was looking intently toward a clump of willows near by.

"Sshh!" and he lifted his little mittened hand, and Milly looked toward the willows and listened. She could hear a queer little note, repeated over and over. It seemed almost to say "Help!" and then "Quick!" over and over.

"It's a bird!" exclaimed Millicent, tiptoeing over the snow, but she need not have feared making a noise. As she reached the bush a bird fluttered up, and then fell back as if pulled down by some unseen hand.

"Oh, what is it holding him?" called Dicky, who was close behind her.

It did not take Millicent long to discover that one of the bird's feet was caught in a string. The little creature fluttered in its efforts to escape, but Millicent clasped it gently.

"Break that string, Dicky," she said. "See, it is twisted about the upper branch." Dicky quickly obeyed, and now the bird lay quietly in Millicent's hands, panting, as if too tired to make another effort for freedom.

"I guess I'd better take it home. I believe one of its wings is hurt," said Millicent, holding it tenderly. "You'll have to draw the sled up the hill, Dicky."

"All right," answered the little fellow sturdily.

"You sit still, Prue; I can pull you up," and, slipping and stumbling, Dicky dragged the sled, with Prue on it, back up the hill, while Millicent carried the little brown bird. The joy of the new sled was quite forgotten in their discovery of the little bird. The string still hung from one of the slender legs.

"I do believe it was caught in a string-trap," declared Millicent, and when they reached the house Mr. Austin said she was right, and showed them how the loop was made in which the song-sparrow's foot had caught.

"Probably the snare was set for partridge," he said.

"I hate snares and traps," exclaimed Millicent. "Just think, a bird might starve and freeze caught by one of these hateful things; and see what a trap did to our poor Blacky."

"Snares and traps are Indian ways of catching game, and it is true that they are hateful," replied her father. "It's fortunate Dicky has such good ears or Master Sparrow would have starved, and probably broken his leg in trying to get free."

"Isn't he tame?" said Millicent, smoothing the delicate feathers gently.

It proved that Master Sparrow's leg was hurt; "sprained," Mr. Austin said, and one of his wings seemed of little use to him. His back was a soft brown color, streaked with black, and he had a black "breastplate."

"Look out for Puss and for Blacky; they might make a supper off Master Sparrow," warned Mrs. Austin, as the children came into the kitchen.

"Puss is in the barn, and I know Blacky wouldn't hurt a bird," said Millicent; but Mrs. Austin thought it best that Blacky should go out in the shed until arrangements were made for the sparrow's safety.

"I'll put some slats across the top of this box, and fix him safe for to-night," said Mr. Austin, returning from the shed with a square wooden box, in which he had put a handful of straw.

"Sparrows like all sorts of grain; he will like this cracked corn," said Mrs. Austin, setting a little dish of cracked corn in the box, together with a cup of water. Then Master Sparrow was put in his new quarters, and the narrow strips of wood fastened securely across the top of the box.

"See! He was hungry," said Dicky, watch-

ing the brown bird eagerly pick up the broken corn.

"He's saying 'Thanks, thanks!'" declared Millicent, as the sparrow chirped contentedly, and soon settled itself on the straw, and tucked its head under its wing as if to say "Good-night. Too tired to talk."

"May we keep him, father?" asked Dicky, as they sat down to supper.

"Why, we'll have to think about that," responded Mr. Austin; "Master Sparrow can generally take pretty good care of himself, even in winter. He knows where to look for seeds, and is easily satisfied. When spring comes he is after caterpillars and cut-worms, and has plenty to do. If this little bird is all sound and well in a few days I think we'll have to let him go free to attend to his own affairs."

"But we may keep him until he's well?" pleaded Dicky.

"Of course we'll do that," agreed his father, and the box holding the sparrow was set on the high chimney shelf over the fireplace before Dicky went up-stairs to bed.

"The sled is splendid, father," said Millicent, when the affairs of the sparrow had been settled,

"but I think now we ought to call it 'The Sparrow,' instead of 'Reindeer'; because, you see, it flew right down to where we found the bird."

So the new sled was renamed "The Sparrow," and Millicent went to bed thinking more about the coasting on Bunker Hill than about the little bird whose name she had given to her sled.

CHAPTER XII

BLACKY'S MASTER

THE sparrow chirped briskly and fluttered smartly about the box next morning; but, nevertheless, it was soon evident that the delicate foot was severely injured, and that one wing was seriously hurt. Master Sparrow would never again be able to flit from tree to tree, or to provide for himself, and so it was settled that henceforth he should be Dicky's especial charge, and that a suitable cage should be made for him without delay.

While the children were all sorry for the harm that had befallen the bird, they were delighted to know that they could have him for a pet.

"'Twould be a cruel thing to set the sparrow free," declared Mrs. Austin, "for, even if he were not eaten up by some cat, he could not take care of himself. Perhaps in a little time the foot and wing will mend so he can go

free; for a cage makes a sad life for a wild bird."

"May I make his cage?" asked Dicky; Mr. Austin agreed, and Dicky ran after his father to the shop to begin work at once. The sparrow had evidently decided to make the best of misfortune, and chirped gently now and then to remind Millicent and her mother that he was really grateful for food and shelter.

"I wish we knew where Blacky really came from," Millicent said thoughtfully, as the little dog peered up at the box in which the sparrow was hopping about. "Do you suppose somebody is feeling bad because he is lost?" For Millicent now loved Blacky so dearly that she was quite sure his former owner must be broken-hearted to have lost him.

"I think it likely Blacky may have been the property of one of General Gage's soldiers, and in following some one across the ferry lost his way, and finally got caught in the cruel trap. But I know of no way that we can discover his master," replied Mrs. Austin, "and I would not worry about it, Milly; for the little dog is happy, and if he had been well treated in his

former home he would, some way, have found his way back."

"I couldn't bear to let him go now," Millicent said, smoothing Blacky's silky head.

A loud rap at the front door made her look up suddenly, and Mrs. Austin looked startled, while little Prue started to run and open the door.

"Come back, child," called her mother. "I'll go to the door," and she hurried through the chilly passage to the front door, which was seldom used during the winter months.

As she drew the bolt and pulled open the door Mrs. Austin wondered to herself who the visitor could be, for the neighbors usually came to the side door. As the door swung open Mrs. Austin found herself facing a red-coated English soldier.

"Is this Richard Austin's house?" he asked.

Mrs. Austin nodded.

"Well, then, I've come after my spaniel that your girl stole when she came to Boston," the man said gruffly, putting his foot over the threshold.

"You will please to step around to the side door," Mrs. Austin responded, and the man

stepped back, grumbling a little, and turned to go to the side door, while Mrs. Austin swung the door to, and ran back to the kitchen.

"Run to the shed, Milly, and call your father," she said. But at that moment Mr. Austin entered the room, and then the red-coated figure appeared at the kitchen door.

"Well, sir?" said Mr. Austin, turning to face the man.

"I've come for my dog," said the man, "a black spaniel. A valuable dog, Mr. Austin, trained and clever. If you'll hand him over I'll say nothing about your little girl toling him off from Boston."

Mr. Austin looked at the fellow sharply.

"A little black dog with a hurt paw came here some weeks ago," he replied, "and we have cared for it. I do not know if it's your dog."

"Well, sir, it is," replied the man more civilly. "His name's Jerry," he added.

"I never saw the dog in Boston," declared Milly, "but I've seen the soldier. His name is Jackson. He didn't want Soldier Francis to take me back to grandma's."

The soldier nodded, a little smile creeping over his face.

"Well, where's the dog?" he asked, looking about the room. "Oh, there you are!" and striding across the room he reached under the settle and pulled Blacky out—a whining, terrified Blacky. "He knows me, all right," said the soldier; and he shook the dog roughly.

"Oh, don't, don't hurt him," pleaded Millicent.

"I'll teach him to stay where he belongs after this," and, without another word to Mr. Austin, the soldier, holding the frightened dog under his arm, strode from the room.

Millicent started to run after him, but her mother stopped her.

"He was hateful to Blacky; Blacky was frightened of him," sobbed Millicent, while Dicky and little Prue stood looking at their father as if they could hardly believe it possible that he would let any one take Blacky away.

"Are you sure it was his dog, Richard?" questioned Mrs. Austin.

"Yes; the very fact that Blacky hid at the sound of the man's voice proves that. But I'm afraid Blacky, or 'Jerry,' as the man called him, has had a hard master," replied Mr. Austin.

"How did he know where Blacky was?"

asked Millicent. "Do you suppose he heard of Blacky at Captain Adams' tavern?"

"Why, yes; that is probably the way Jackson got news of his dog. But we must remember that Blacky belongs to him," said Mr. Austin.

The day passed very sadly. Dicky did not have much interest in working on the cage for Master Sparrow; and little Prue could not be consoled for Blacky's loss even by "Caroline Rosalind."

"Millicent, I believe I'll let you take Dicky to Bunker Hill this afternoon," Mrs. Austin said as they sat down to dinner.

But Millicent shook her head. "I don't want to go," she said dully. She was quite sure that she could never be happy again as long as Blacky would have to live with a cruel master.

The next day after Blacky's departure Sammy Crafts brought a letter from Grandmother Barclay; it had come by the way of Cambridge, and said that Mrs. Barclay was in Dedham, and would remain there until Roxbury and Boston were free from English soldiers.

"Does she say anything about the brown horses?" Millicent questioned eagerly.

"Yes, and it is indeed good news, and is the

result of your telling General Gage the truth. Listen, and I'll read you what your grandmother says," replied Mrs. Austin. "'The British general sent the horses safely home,'" she read. "'I suppose he liked not to have the name of "thief" added to that of an English soldier. Millicent was indeed a brave child to try to undo the mischief, and I hope she will henceforth be more thoughtful; for losing the horses would have been serious trouble for me.'"

"She doesn't say a word, not a word about Cousin Mary," said Milly, a little reproachfully.

For a moment Mrs. Austin was silent, then she put her arm about Millicent and said gently, "Never mind about Mary, dear child. Her mischief is her own affair. I want you to learn and remember this little verse:

> "'Of all Excuses this is most forbid:
> "I did The Thing because the Others did."'"

Millicent said the lines over after her mother, and soon had them by heart. She knew they fitted her case very well; but, nevertheless, she felt it was rather hard to have Grandmother Barclay blame her for the loss of the brown horses.

"Where's Blacky?" Sammy Crafts asked, when he came in from the shed where Dicky had proudly displayed the cage for Master Sparrow.

When Sammy heard of the soldier's visit the boy's face flushed.

"A fellow like that has no business to be a soldier, not even an English soldier," he declared.

"That's right, Sammy," said Mrs. Austin. "A soldier ought to be above injuring any helpless creature."

"I'll take Dicky and Millicent sliding if you're willing?" Sammy suggested. "I don't have to go right home."

And now Millicent was ready to go, and started off with Dicky and Sammy for Bunker Hill. Dicky consented to let Millicent and Sammy pull the sled while he rode in state.

"It's a steep coast down Bunker Hill, but that makes it all the more fun," said Sammy as they went briskly along over the frozen snow.

As they reached the point from which they meant to coast down the children turned and looked over the town, and at the two smaller heights, Breed Hill and Moulton's Point, toward

Boston. Neither of the children dreamed that they were standing on a slope where, in a very few months, a terrible battle would rage, or that the name "Bunker Hill" was to become a name sacred to every American.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LONDON SLED

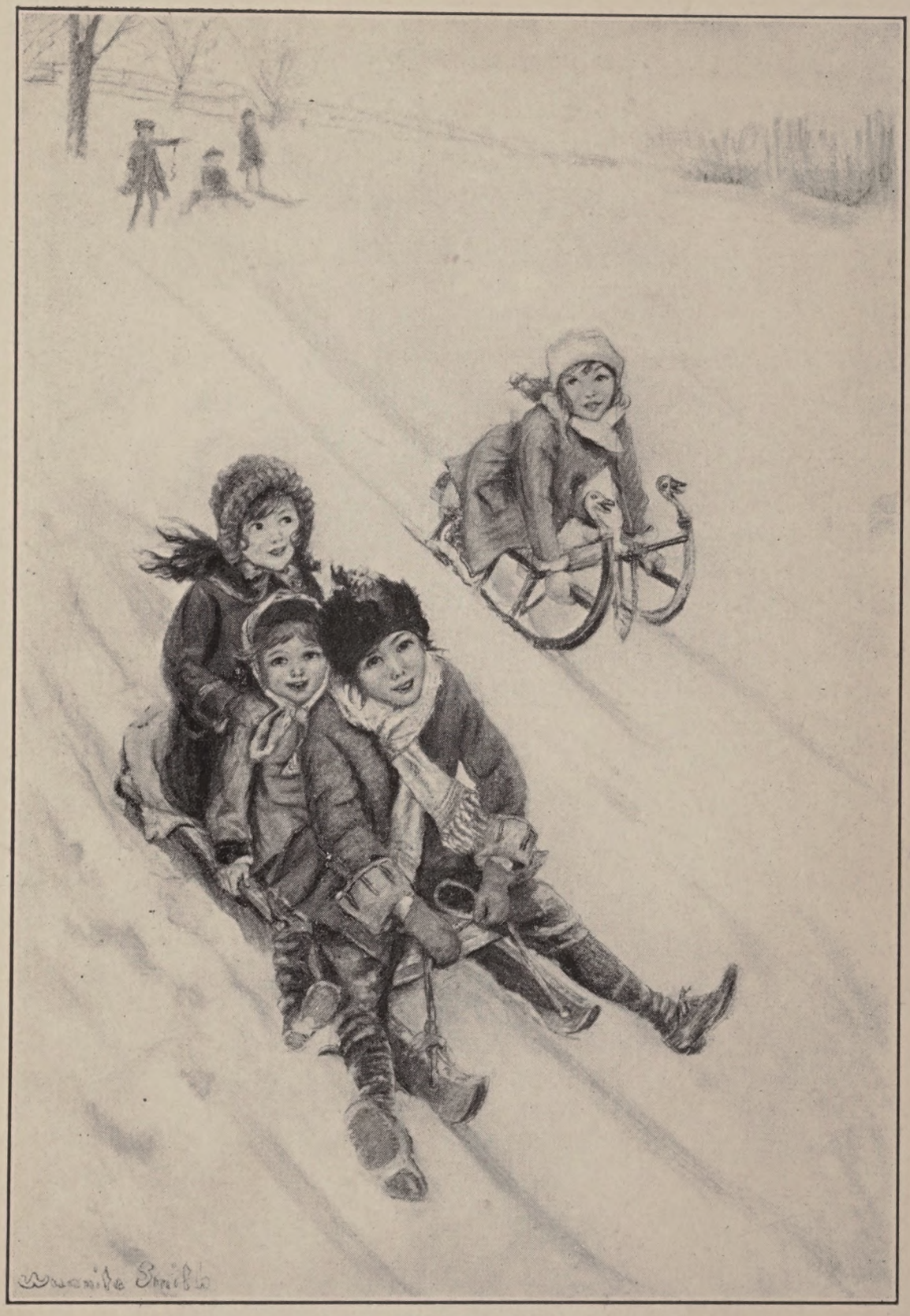
THERE were several other coasting parties on the hill. Polly Danforth, a girl of Millicent's own age, was there with a fine sled. It was painted a bright red, and its steel runners curved up in front and were ornamented with delicately carved swans' heads. Polly herself was dressed in a scarlet coat and a round cap of white fur.

"Hullo, Milly Austin," she called, with a scornful look at Millicent's home-made sled. "Where did you get that sled?" she asked.

"My father made it," replied Millicent proudly, but looking admiringly at Polly's shining red sled. "Where did you get yours?"

"Oh, mine came from England," answered Polly, with evident pride.

"Well, I wouldn't slide on it," declared Sammy Crafts. "Massachusetts sleds are good enough for us, aren't they, Milly?" and Milly nodded her agreement.



AWAY THEY WENT

Polly laughed good-naturedly. "I don't care what you say," she replied; "my sled is the finest one in Charles Town. You can slide with me if you want to, Milly."

"I guess I'd rather slide on my own sled," Milly answered.

"All right," and with a wave of her white mittened hand Polly turned to her sled, and in a moment was flying down the hill.

"Good for you, Milly," said Sammy. "This is a fine sled; hop on beside Dicky. I'll steer you down; and I'll bet we go right past that old London sled."

Millicent was on the sled in a jiffy, and away they went. Whether Sammy chose the better coast, or the home-made sled was really better suited to the rough hillside than Polly's finer sled, the "Sparrow" shot past the "Swan," slipped swiftly down the hill and across the narrow field at the foot; and its passengers were there to call out their triumph when Polly's sled bounded down behind them.

"Your sled goes better than it looks," laughed Polly. "I'd like to slide down on yours, even if you won't slide on mine," and the four children climbed up the slope together, quite forget-

ting kings and revolutions. But this pleasant state of affairs did not last long.

"Dicky, you come slide with me this time, and then I'll coast down with Milly, and you and Sammy can try my sled," suggested Polly, as they reached the top of the slope.

"No, thank you," replied Dicky politely.

"Why not?" demanded Polly.

"'Cause I don't like your sled. I like you, though," replied Dicky, smiling up at the bright-cheeked, pleasant girl.

Polly's smile faded. "Well, then, I don't like you, Dicky Austin, nor your sister, either. You are just rebels, Yankee rebels; my father says so," and Polly started as if to turn away.

"Oh, Polly, don't be angry," exclaimed Millicent, running after her. "Dicky didn't mean to hurt your feelings. It's just because your sled came from London. You just leave the sled up here, and coast down with Sammy and Dicky once. Do, Polly! I'll stay and watch your sled."

Polly stood silent for a moment. She did not have many playmates, because it was well known that her father's sympathy was with the invaders of Boston; and the Charles Town children were

apt to call her "Tory, Tory." Although Polly did not quite know what the word meant, it always provoked her to call back, "Rebel! Rebel!"

"I don't see why you don't like my sled," she answered.

"Come on, Polly," urged Sammy. "You'll have a better coast on a good American sled," and Polly, handing the "Swan's" rope to Milly, took her place on the "Sparrow," and went happily off down the hill.

Milly stood watching the others, thinking that her father was really the most wonderful father in the world to make so fine a sled from a few boards.

"Oh!" she exclaimed suddenly, for a big snowball had struck her fairly between the shoulders, and in a second two or three more snowballs fell close beside her; and she heard a voice call "Tory, with your red sled, get off Bunker Hill," and more snowballs fell, one striking her on the head and another on the shoulder.

Millicent turned quickly about and saw, farther up the slope, a fort-like embankment of snow, and over the top a number of dark heads.

Just then came a call from the foot of the hill, and Sammy Crafts came rushing up the hill.

"Firing at a girl!" he called scornfully, and a sudden cessation of the snowballs proved that the boys in the snow fort had heard him. "Make up snowballs, Milly," he called, "just as fast as you can; I'll drive those boys out of the fort."

Milly hastened to obey, and Sammy, rolling up the soft snow, hurled the balls rapidly at the heads of the enemy whenever one appeared over the snow wall.

By this time Polly and Dicky had arrived, and they too joined in volleys of snowballs against the enemy's snow fort.

"Come on; let's drive those boys out of their fort," said Sammy, running up the hill, closely followed by Millicent, Polly and Dicky.

"Hold on, Sam Crafts," called a boy, appearing from behind the fortification. "Say, you ain't a Tory. We're fighting the Tory girl."

Sam stopped suddenly.

"Well, you're a nice set," he called back; "I guess your old fort ain't worth taking, anyway. 'Twas Milly Austin you were throwing snowballs at. Not much Tory about her; and any-

way, you're pretty small to fight a girl, Tory or no Tory."

The boy seemed surprised to hear Sammy, and a little ashamed as well, but he endeavored to defend himself. "I don't care; we ain't going to have any London sleds on this hill," he shouted.

Polly was close behind Sammy, and Millicent saw that she was ready to cry. She reached out and clasped Polly's hand in her own.

"We like you, Polly, Tory or no Tory," she declared, "and you've got just as much right to slide here as those hateful boys; hasn't she, Sam?"

"Of course she has; the idea of fighting a girl," responded Sam.

"Here, you fellows, come out from behind that wall. I'm going to give you a good licking," and Sammy rushed valiantly toward the heaped up snow. As he did so two boys ran out in the other direction, and without looking back to see if they were pursued or not vanished round the curve of the hill.

"Let 'em go, and good riddance," declared Sammy. "Don't feel bad, Polly; you can't help it if your father is a Tory. Come on, I'll slide you down the hill on your sled," Sam con-

cluded handsomely. At this Polly's face brightened, and they turned back to where they had left their sleds.

"Oh, the sleds are gone," Dicky called out. And indeed not a trace of the "Sparrow" or the "Swan" was to be seen.

It was a very sober little group that said good-bye to Polly Danforth, whose home was near the square in an opposite direction from the Austin farm.

"There must have been other boys who sneaked off after the sleds when we started for the fort," said Sammy.

"I don't care so very much," declared Polly. "I guess I never would enjoy that London sled. But I'm sorry you lost yours."

"Well, we had a good time, if our new sled is lost," said Millicent, a little mournfully, as they walked toward home. Dicky had grasped Millicent's hand as if he feared that she, too, might disappear.

"I'm afraid your folks will blame me about the sled," responded Sammy soberly. "You see, I'm older; and of course they thought I'd take care of you."

"You did, Sammy; and of Polly, too."

"Don't feel bad," said Sammy as they reached Millicent's gate; "perhaps you'll get both the sled and the dog back some day."

Milly shook her head. "No, I guess they're both lost forever," she said despondently; "but, Sammy Crafts, I do think you're splendid. I shouldn't wonder if you grew up just exactly like Dr. Joseph Warren," and Millicent felt sure that no boy could expect higher praise than that.

Sammy thought it was high praise indeed.

CHAPTER XIV

BLACKY RETURNS

"MILLICENT! Millicent! Here's our sled!" exclaimed Dicky, the very next morning after the coasting adventure, as he came running up the path from the gate. "It was right under the willow tree."

Millicent ran out to look at the sled. It was not hurt in any way; it was evident that Polly Danforth's "London" sled had been the reason of the mischief, and that the boys had no wish to hurt the home-made "Sparrow."

"It's splendid to have it back, but the snow is melting so fast I don't believe we can slide to-day," said Millicent.

"It's slushy," agreed Dicky, "but perhaps 'twill freeze to-night," he added hopefully.

But it did not freeze that night. The weather grew warmer, and in a few days the snow had all disappeared. The winter of 1774–1775 was an unusually open season; but when March came there were heavy winds, cold rains, and

long days when the Austin children had to stay close in the house, and it was then that Milly practiced on the drum and Dicky on the flute, to the evident amazement of Master Sparrow, who would now and then pipe up and endeavor to sing a note louder than Dicky's flute.

A few days after the return of the sled, when the snow had all disappeared, Millicent went down to the willow tree and climbed up to her playhouse. There were a good many broken twigs on the floor, and it had a deserted and forsaken look.

"Never mind," said Millicent aloud, just as if the playhouse would understand. "I'll get a broom and sweep you out, and pretty soon 'twill be summer again," and she clambered down from the tree, and was soon back with the broom and busily at work putting the little place in order. The sun shone warmly down through the leafless branches; a sturdy yellow-hammer called loudly from the big maple, and, as Millicent looked off toward the marshes, she could see a flock of white gulls circling over the river.

"There's going to be rain," she said wisely. "When the gulls come in like that it means

rain," for children living in country places learn to watch the birds and the growing things and to be "weather wise."

"Milly! Milly! Mayn't Prue and I come up?" Dicky called from below.

"Yes, and bring Caroline Rosalind," responded Millicent; and for an hour or two the children played happily.

"Listen!" little Prue exclaimed suddenly, leaning over the railing. "Oh, Millicent! Dicky! Here's Blacky!" she exclaimed, leaning so far over the railing in her excitement that she nearly lost her balance.

But neither Millicent nor Dicky paid any attention to little Prue; for they, too, had heard the familiar bark and were both scrambling down.

"See,—he must have chewed off the rope he was tied with!" said Millicent, for a frayed rope end hung from Blacky's neck.

"He's awfully thin," declared Dicky. "I'll bet that soldier man hasn't been good to him."

Blacky was evidently glad to find himself again in the sunny kitchen, and quite forgot his former troubles with Puss until she gave him a smart slap with her paw. He ran about

the room as if to say how happy he was to find himself there, and had an excellent appetite for the food Mrs. Austin gave him.

"The soldier man shan't take him away again," declared Dicky valiantly.

"No, indeed, he shan't," agreed Millicent. "I'll carry Blacky off and hide him if that soldier comes again for him."

A week passed, and Blacky's owner did not appear; and the children had begun to feel safe in their new possession of the little dog, when one morning there was the sound of a horse's hoofs and Sammy Crafts, mounted on his father's big farm horse, galloped into the yard. He slid down from the saddle and came running into the house.

"I say, excuse me," and Sammy pulled off his cap and made his polite bow to Mrs. Austin; "there are two English soldiers riding this way from the square. They asked me if I had seen a black spaniel, and I said 'No,' and then one of the men laughed and said, 'Oh, he's back with those children, all right.' So I knew 'twas Blacky," and Sammy stopped, quite out of breath.

While he was speaking Millicent had caught

up her mother's gray shawl and was now wrapping it about the little dog; and with a warning word to Dicky and Prue, "Don't you say one word," she had opened the door and run out.

"I mustn't stay, or they'll think I've warned you," declared Sammy, running back to the yard and mounting the big horse; and in a moment he was out of the yard and going toward home at a good pace.

"Now, Dicky," said Mrs. Austin, who had not spoken, "get some cracked corn and water for Master Sparrow; and you, Prue, can bring me a few kindlings from the shed. 'Tis time to think of dinner."

"Mother, will the man take our Blacky?" demanded Dicky, almost ready to cry.

"Richard, do as I tell you. If the English soldier comes here do not speak one word about the dog. Nor you, either, Prudence," said Mrs. Austin, starting toward the pantry.

The twins looked at each other in amazement. "Richard!" "Prudence!" They could hardly remember that their mother had ever before called them by their full names; and they had hardly recovered from their surprise when there was a sharp rap at the front door.

"Remember," cautioned Mrs. Austin in a low tone, as she turned to go to the door.

"I must be civil," she said to herself, as she drew the bolt.

"I have to ask your pardon," sounded a friendly voice, and Mrs. Austin found herself greeting a smiling, friendly-faced man; "my name is Francis, and I am told this is where Miss Millicent Austin, a little friend of mine, lives," and the big soldier, holding his hat in his hand, stood waiting her answer.

"Why, yes, indeed. Will you not come in? We have to thank you for your kindness to our little girl."

"I can stop but a moment," the soldier answered, "but I thought I'd like well to see the little maid again," and he followed Mrs. Austin through the hallway.

"This is Soldier Francis, children, who took such good care of Millicent when she went to Boston," said Mrs. Austin, and the tall soldier shook hands with the somewhat frightened children.

"Millicent will be sorry not to see you," said Mrs. Austin, "and my husband is not at home. He, too, would have welcomed you."

The soldier was evidently disappointed not to see Milly. He admired Master Sparrow, praised Dicky for making so fine a cage for the bird, and then said that he must go.

"Tell the little maid that she did me a good service in coming to Boston," he said as he stood outside the door, "and that I am indeed sorry not to see her again," and with a pleasant good-bye, he strode down the path to the gate where his companion was waiting.

"Look, mother! There is Blacky's master at the gate," whispered Dicky, as he ran to the door; "and, see, they are riding off without a word about Blacky."

"'Tis some kind plan of Soldier Francis', this visit," said Mrs. Austin, as she went back to the kitchen. "I doubt not but that he knew well the little dog had found its way back here, and was in good hands."

"Well, your dog is not there, Jackson," said Francis as he mounted his horse. "The children had nothing to say of the dog. Now, I tell you what, Jackson, I'll buy your dog. I'll give you ten shillings, and if he's ever found he is my dog; and if he has really disappeared, why, then you are ten shillings the better off."

His companion looked at him sharply. "You are as ready as a Yankee to take a chance," he responded, "but give me your money. The dog never appreciated all I did for him. You are sure you did not hear any news of the dog?" And he counted the money that Soldier Francis handed him.

"Of course I'm sure. I saw naught of the dog. But now that he is my property I'm going back to tell those children that if he does come this way to take care of him for me," said Francis, and turning his horse he galloped back to the Austins.

As Soldier Francis drew rein at the Austins' gate he heard some one call his name in a surprised, half-frightened voice. But, looking about, he could not see any one.

"I'm up in the tree; right over your head," called Millicent.

"Well, well, little maid. Come down, and do not fear to bring the little dog with you. For I have come to say that the spaniel is yours. You need never fear that any one can take him from you."

In a moment Milly was standing beside him, holding Blacky closely in her arms.

"Truly?" she questioned eagerly.

Francis nodded. "Truly," he said. "I bought the dog from Jackson; and I'll be obliged to you if you'll take him. I cannot bother with him."

"Oh! I'm so glad. But you must come and tell mother," responded Millicent. "There she comes now," she added quickly, for Mrs. Austin was hurrying down the path.

"Blacky is my very own," called Millicent happily; and Soldier Francis explained.

Mrs. Austin looked at the big soldier very kindly as she thanked him. "We shall always think of you as our good friend, even if you must fight against the rights of Americans."

For a moment Soldier Francis did not speak. He had come to realize that the American people were ready to give all that they had in defense of the justice of their cause.

"You will come again, won't you?" said Milly, as he mounted his horse.

"Perhaps I shall, when all this trouble is over," he answered gravely, and raising his cap, galloped away toward the ferry.

When Mr. Austin returned from Cambridge, the children were all eager to tell him about

their visitors, and of the wonderful fact that now Blacky was really and truly their very own.

"Francis is a good fellow," Mr. Austin declared. "Who knows, he may yet become a good American citizen! But these English soldiers come about Charles Town too often," he added gravely. "I fear they have knowledge of the American stores and provisions in Concord, and maybe are planning to capture them."

"How would you children like to go to Dedham, and visit your Uncle Barclay?" Mr. Austin asked as they gathered at the supper table that night; for he was uneasy over the news he had that day heard at Cambridge, and had begun to feel that his family might not be safe in their own home.

"I don't want to go," Milly answered her father's question promptly; for a visit to Dedham meant staying in the same house with her Cousin Mary, and Millicent was sure that there would be little happiness in that.

"Might we take Blacky and Master Sparrow?" questioned Dicky anxiously, while little Prue, apparently not at all concerned by the suggestion, ate her bread and milk.

"Why, yes; I do not think we should leave any live creature behind us which needed care," answered his father.

"Then let's go," said Dicky. "'Twould be fun."

But Millicent did not think it would be fun; and, as she heard her mother agree that, when spring came, it might be wise to go to Uncle Barclay's in Dedham, she began to feel very unhappy, and thought to herself that she wished she could send all the English soldiers back to their own country. "I'm sure they'd like to go," she thought, remembering Soldier Francis' kindly smile.

CHAPTER XV

THE JOURNEY TO DEDHAM

THERE were very few days of good coasting that February, and the Austin children did not go to Bunker Hill again. Early in the month they heard that Polly Danforth had gone to Boston; or, rather, that Mr. Danforth had moved his family there.

Millicent felt very sorry that she could not have seen Polly again; especially as now it had been settled by Mr. and Mrs. Austin that Mrs. Austin and the children should go to Dedham as soon as the roads should be in good condition for traveling.

March came, with fierce winds and driving rains, shutting the children indoors, and it was now that Blacky proved himself the best of good company. The big sitting-room was a fine place for play, and Millicent, remembering what her father had told her about "Jongleurs," began to imitate the sparrow's song, with such good success that Mrs. Austin, busy in the neighboring

rooms, would smile to herself when she discovered that she could not distinguish which was the bird's or which was Millicent's note.

"I do wish we had a tame robin," said Millicent one March morning. "I know I could sing like a robin. Isn't it time for robins, mother?"

"Where are your eyes and ears, Milly? There have been robins about the willow tree a number of times," replied Mrs. Austin. "See! There is one on the path this minute!" and Mrs. Austin pointed to a bird whose sharp eyes were turned toward the house.

"He looks as if he knew we were talking about him," whispered Dicky. "I wish I could catch him. I'd make a fine cage for him."

"You could never make him as happy as he is now."

"There! He's coming right up to the house," said Millicent. "I'm going to put some corn on the window sill."

"Put some crumbs of corn-cake; he'll like that better," suggested her mother.

But Sir Robin was easily alarmed, and flew off to the willow tree. It was several days before he made up his mind that it would really be safe to light on the window sill; but at last he

did venture, and within a week he was coming every morning and Millicent learned to imitate his note.

But Millicent was now anxious to learn the songs of other birds; and, as the days grew warmer, she often started off alone through the fields, stopping often by the stone walls and fences to listen quietly for the note of some singing bird.

"You will find many more birds in Dedham than Charles Town. There are more trees there, and it is a more quiet place," her father said one afternoon when he met Millicent coming through the field which sloped to the old boat-yard.

"Then we are really going?" said Milly, in so mournful a tone that her father looked down at her anxiously.

"Why, yes, my dear; and I like sending you away as little as you like going," he replied soberly, "but you will like to see your Grandmother Barclay. Remember, she has had to leave her home. You must be a good child, Millicent; I can't go with you, you know."

"Oh, father!" and Millicent stood quite still, and looked up into his face. "Then we won't go. Not if you don't!"

A little smile crept about her father's lips. "I can't go," he answered, and all at once Millicent's thoughts flew back to her birthday, and she remembered what her mother had said about "loyal Americans": that a "loyal American" did not fear danger when it was in defense of his country.

"You are a loyal American, aren't you, father?" she said, lifting a smiling face; "just like Dr. Joseph Warren."

"Well, I couldn't be anything better than that, could I? And now I'll say good-bye for a whole week, for I have to be in camp."

After this little talk with her father Millicent said nothing against the proposed visit to Dedham.

Mrs. Crafts listened to Milly's bird songs with as much pleasure as did Dicky and little Prue. "I declare to it, your Grandmother Barclay will be proud indeed when she hears you," she said admiringly; and this made the little girl almost eager for the time to come when they would start for Dedham.

The Crafts had decided that they would not leave home.

"Mr. Crafts is with his company, and if any

trouble does come Sammy's sure to think that he and his drum would save all Massachusetts; and so there wouldn't be anybody but me to go; and I guess I could manage to stay safe enough in my own house," declared the smiling little woman. "Of course with children like yours 'tis best not to stay here," she added.

Milly listened eagerly to all that Mrs. Crafts said. The children were very fond of Sammy's mother.

While the children were talking of birds Mrs. Austin told Mrs. Crafts more of the plan for removing to Dedham.

"'Twill be only for a visit, I trust," she said, "and, since you are remaining in your own home, perhaps you'll let us know if all goes well here?"

"Of course I will, and give you a good welcome on your return. 'Tis to be hoped that the king will change his mind, for Americans wish him well, and have no mind to fight unless driven to it," said Mrs. Crafts.

"'Tis not fair to shut up Boston Harbor," reponded Mrs. Austin. "I fear greatly that trouble is near. Provisions are scarce indeed."

"We'll have an eye on your place here while you're away," repeated Mrs. Crafts, "and like

as not they'll listen to Samuel Adams and Dr. Warren, and all these days of worry end in peace."

"I hope so, indeed," replied Mrs. Austin.

It was a bright April morning when they started on their journey. They were going in the chaise, and Mr. Austin was to accompany them on horseback for a part of the distance. All their preparations were completed on the previous day. The cow had been driven to Mr. Crafts' pasture; Puss was to stay with Mrs. Crafts, and the flock of hens also; Blacky would ride in the chaise, and Dicky had come to a decision about Master Sparrow which meant that the little bird was to have a chance for freedom if it proved that his wings could carry him.

For several days Dicky had watched the bird with a very serious look in his blue eyes. At last he made up his mind that Master Sparrow should have a chance for freedom and happiness; that the cage door should be opened, and if it proved that the bird could fly, why, then Dicky would give him up.

When he had quite made up his mind he told Millicent, and was surprised at her exclamation of approval.

"That is splendid, Dicky. I guess father will be proud of you."

"But I'm not going to open the cage door until the very morning we start for Dedham," Dicky had replied; and now, while his father was harnessing "Goldy" into the chaise, Dicky brought the cage into the yard.

The children all felt rather sad at the thought of giving up the little bird.

"Perhaps he won't want to fly away," said Prue hopefully.

"I guess Master Sparrow knows that an American bird must be free," Mrs. Austin said laughingly.

"Come, father, and watch Master Sparrow," Millicent called; and Mr. Austin, leading "Goldy" by the bridle-rein, came across the yard and stood near Millicent and her mother.

"There! I'm going to open the door now!" announced Dicky.

For a moment the sparrow looked at the opening a little doubtfully; then he hopped toward it, paused for a moment, turning his head this way and that, and then, suddenly, he was in the air, and in a moment was perched on the top of the lilac bush.

"Oh!" exclaimed little Prue, almost ready to cry.

"His wing is all right. Listen, he is thanking you, Dicky," said Mrs. Austin, for the sparrow was singing as if he really was more happy than any bird had ever been before. The children had never heard their little visitor sing like that. Then there was a flash of brown wings, and Master Sparrow was gone.

Without a word Dicky picked up the empty cage and carried it into the house. When he came out Millicent was quite sure that Dicky had been crying, and little Prue had very little to say until they were well on their journey.

Mr. Austin brought out the small leather trunk and strapped it securely on the back of the chaise; and then a number of boxes and packages were put carefully under the wide seat.

It seemed to Millicent that her mother and father were very grave and silent as they drove away from the pleasant stone house and the big willow tree.

They had made an early start, and the sun was only an hour high. The marshes were putting on the delicate green of early spring, and the fields were green along by the walls and

fences. There were many birds flying about, and Prue began to be hopeful that perhaps Master Sparrow would follow them. A soft air came over the fields, and it seemed that no harm could ever come to so quiet and beautiful a scene. Yet Mr. Austin had heard that on the other side of the river General Gage was already preparing his troops to cross the stream and journey to Concord to secure the cannon and provisions of the American troops. He did not know how soon this attempt might be made; but he knew the time had come for his wife and children to go to a place of greater safety, as it was more than likely that the English troops would march through Charles Town if they went to Concord.

When they had left Cambridge far behind them, and were riding along a quiet road shaded by tall elms, Mr. Austin said that it was time for him to turn back.

"The rest of your way leads through a quiet, peaceful country," he said; "I'll see you soon, never fear," and although her father was smiling, as he dismounted and came close to the chaise to bid them good-bye, Millicent thought that, in some way she could not explain to her-

self, he was worried and sad to let them go. She felt ready to cry; but her mother was smiling, so Millicent smiled, and they all stood by the chaise and watched Mr. Austin as he rode swiftly back over the road they had just traveled. It was to be many weeks before they saw him again.

As they continued their journey Blacky ran along beside the chaise, but when they came to a steep hill he began to hold up his lame paw as if to say he was tired. The children all got out of the chaise, and Millicent lifted Blacky in beside her mother.

"We'll walk up the hill, mother," she said.

"Where's your drum, Milly?" Dicky asked.

"Safe under the seat of the chaise. You didn't think I'd forget my drum, did you?" answered Millicent.

"Father gave me his flute this morning," said Dicky. "It's in my pocket. He said it was mine. But I'll give it back if he wants it when we get home."

From the top of the hill they could look back toward Boston and see the glimmer of the waters of the Charles. In the other direction lay thick

woods, with here and there cleared fields and pleasant homes.

"We are half-way now," said Mrs. Austin, "and I guess we are all ready for a bite to eat," and she guided the sorrel horse to the side of the road, and took out the lunch basket.

"Mother! what's that noise?" Millicent asked, and they all stood listening.

"I think it must be mounted soldiers," Mrs. Austin replied in a whisper. "They are coming up the other slope of the hill. Get back into the chaise, quickly! And do not let Blacky bark."

They could now hear the regular beat of horses' hoofs and the rattle and clink of metal.

"What shall we do, mother? Are you frightened?" whispered Millicent.

"No, indeed. At the worst it is a party of English soldiers, and I have yet to hear of their hurting women or children."

"But perhaps they won't let us go on?" said Millicent.

Mrs. Austin had not thought of that possibility; and now it was too late to think of any plan to escape meeting them.

"Go on, Goldy," said Mrs. Austin, and the pretty sorrel trotted carefully down the hill. Milly had pushed Blacky behind her mother's skirts, with a warning word to "lie still."

As the soldiers reached the chaise they drew rein; and, touching his hat, the officer in advance called sharply, "Stop your horse, madam," and Mrs. Austin quickly drew rein.

"Good-morning, gentlemen," she said pleasantly, leaning out from the chaise. "I am Mrs. Austin, and these are my three children; and we are going to Dedham to stay until you Englishmen sail back to your own country."

"And may you have but a short and pleasant visit, madam," responded the officer smilingly; and with a word to the others, he again touched his hat to Mrs. Austin, and the little troop galloped by.

Mrs. Austin drew a long breath of relief. "I like not their spying about the towns in this fashion," she said.

"Mother! Mother!" Millicent's voice was a frightened whisper, and her mother looked down at her in surprise. "Oh, mother! One of those men was Blacky's master. See how Blacky is trembling and shaking," and she drew

the little dog out and held him closely. "You don't suppose he'll come back, do you?"

"No; they were evidently in a hurry. We'll stop and eat our luncheon a little further on," replied Mrs. Austin; and a little later when they came to where a wood-road opened from the highway, Mrs. Austin turned and drove in a short distance, so that no traveler passing along the road would see them.

The wood-road opened into a little clearing where the sun shone warmly down.

"This is just the place for Goldy to rest," said Mrs. Austin, "and there are some oats for him to nibble, as well as something for us to eat."

The bottle of cool milk, the squares of corn-cake, and the molasses cookies, with the hard-boiled eggs, made a satisfying luncheon.

Dicky and Prue discovered violets blossoming around some of the stumps, and decided to gather a bunch to take to their Grandmother Barclay.

"Couldn't we make a little basket?" suggested Millicent.

"Of course we could; take this knife and cut a few of those little willow sprouts, Millicent;

and Dicky, you and Prue look along the edge of the woods there and see if you can't find some damp moss."

Millicent soon returned with a handful of willow shoots, and in a few moments Mrs. Austin had twisted and woven them into a dainty little basket. Dicky and Prue brought back handfuls of fresh green moss and delicate ferns, and when the violets were carefully put in the moss, and covered with the ferns, the children were sure that their grandmother would find the flowers fresh and fragrant.

They reached Dedham in the early afternoon ; and as they came in sight of Mr. Barclay's house Millicent exclaimed : " Why, it is just exactly like Grandmother Barclay's house ! "

And indeed it had been built as much like her Uncle Barclay's Roxbury home as possible ; the driveway was shaded with elms which seemed to Millicent exactly like the Roxbury trees. Then there were the terraces, with stone steps leading up to the front door ; and when Christopher came running to welcome them, and Grandma Barclay appeared on the terrace, the children could hardly believe they were not in Roxbury.

Then Mary came running to welcome her cousins, closely followed by her mother; and very soon Millicent was going up the broad stairway with Mary's arm about her shoulders, and they were talking happily together as though nothing unpleasant had ever happened between them.

"This is the room where you and your mother will sleep, and here's a trundle-bed for little Prue," said Mary, leading the way into one of the big, square front rooms. "And Dicky is to have this little room right behind it."

At that moment there was a wild scrambling on the stairs, a series of joyful barks, followed by the loud calls of Christopher from the terrace, and Blacky rushed into the room.

"Oh, it's my Blacky!" exclaimed Millicent. "I had forgotten all about him."

"A dog! A black dog!" whispered Mary; and Millicent turned to see her cousin hurrying toward the door.

"Yes; isn't he lovely? He is my very own dog," responded Millicent.

"Call Christopher to take him to the stable," said Mary sharply. "I hate dogs. Christopher! Christopher!" she called.

For a moment Millicent did not know what to do. Her first instinct was to defy Mary, and declare that Blacky should not be sent off to the stable. Then she remembered that she was Mary's guest, and that no one had asked Blacky to come. So when the good-natured Christopher stood in the doorway, she said: "Oh, Christopher. This is my dear Blacky; you'll take good care of him, won't you?"

"'Deed I will, missy. I'll be right pleased to have his company," replied Chris; and Blacky seemed quite ready to make friends with him.

Mary still kept her place on the further side of the room.

"I'm afraid of dogs," she said, looking at Millicent reproachfully. "What made you bring him here? He mustn't ever come into the house again."

Millicent stood for a moment looking down at the floor. She wished they were all back in their own home. At that moment Millicent's mother and Grandma Barclay came into the room, closely followed by Dicky, little Prue, and Mary's mother, "Aunt Ann," and no more was said about Blacky. Millicent kept close to her mother's side for the rest of the day, and

found a chance to tell her that Mary had said Blacky must not come in the house.

"Never mind, dear; say nothing about it to any one. Perhaps your cousin will change her mind," said Mrs. Austin. "You can run out to the stable and see him a few minutes after supper."

CHAPTER XVI

MARY'S SURPRISE

When Millicent awoke the next morning she found that her mother had already arisen. Little Prue was sleeping soundly in her comfortable trundle-bed. As Millicent lay looking about the big chamber and thinking of all the events of the past few days she heard a bird's song, and sat up in bed and looked eagerly toward the eastern window near which grew the branches of an apple tree. "I do believe that is an oriole," she whispered to herself; and slipping out of bed she ran to the window and looked out just in time to catch a glimpse of two golden-winged birds as they darted off from the apple tree's topmost bough.

Millicent whistled the musical notes softly to herself. "Perhaps they are building a nest in the tree, and will come back," she thought hopefully.

She helped Prue dress, and called Dicky, and

when their mother came to call them to breakfast they were all quite ready.

The others were in the dining-room, and Grandma Barclay called Millicent to sit beside her.

"Your mother tells me you can play on the drum," she said, smiling down at her little namesake, "and that Dicky is learning to play the flute."

"Dicky can play splendidly," announced Prue, quite forgetting her dish of porridge in her anxiety to have justice done to Dicky's attainments.

"I am sure he can," said Aunt Ann pleasantly; and Mary asked eagerly where Millicent got her drum, and who taught her to play. Mary was very eager to hear her cousins play, but her mother said that morning was not a good time for music; that they would wait a day or two and perhaps ask some of their neighbors to come in for an evening and hear the drum and flute players.

"Why can't Blacky come into the house?" asked Dicky. "He always used to sleep in the kitchen at home."

Mary's face flushed uncomfortably, and she looked toward her mother. But it was her grandmother who answered Dicky's question:

"Your Cousin Mary isn't acquainted with dogs, and so she thinks they are like lions and wolves, and is afraid of them. Isn't that so, Mary?"

Mary nodded her head. Her eyes were fixed on her plate, for she felt sure that her cousins all despised her for being afraid of a little dog like Blacky.

"Are you afraid of kittens, Cousin Mary?" Prue asked in so serious a tone that they all smiled, and before Mary could answer Millicent said:

"Molly will like Blacky when they are acquainted. He can do a little dance, and march, and shake hands."

"Truly? Can he, truly?" exclaimed Mary. "I'd like to see him."

So that before breakfast was over the children were friendly again, and Mary was quite willing to go with her cousins to the stable to make Blacky a visit, and even ventured to pat his silky head. That afternoon the little dog was allowed to come into the house, and proved himself so polite and friendly a visitor that he did not return to the stable.

Nothing was said about the return of the brown

horses to Grandma Barclay until the Austins had been in Dedham for several days; then, one afternoon when "Milly" and "Molly," as they now constantly called each other, were walking with their grandmother she said to Millicent:

"My dear child, it was very brave of you to go to Boston and try to undo your mischief; and grandma quite forgives you for all the trouble," and she rested her hand on Milly's shoulder.

Milly felt her face flush, and was almost ready to cry. She felt it was very hard that Mary, who had been the one to suggest and carry out the mischief, should not have had a word of blame; while she, Millicent, whose birthday had been spoiled, and who had had to suffer all the trouble, was always referred to as "mischievous."

Molly walked along beside her cousin without speaking. She noticed Milly's flushed face, and for a moment quite expected to hear Milly declare that it was Molly who had suggested letting the horses loose, and who had afterward left her alone in the woods. Molly knew that was what she would do if she had been unfairly blamed.

Grandmother Barclay seemed a little disappointed at Milly's silence; but no more was said

about the affair, and grandma began to be rather sorry that she had spoken about it, for Milly and Molly were both very silent during the walk.

When they returned to the house Grandma Barclay went indoors and left the two little girls on the terrace.

"See, Milly, the lilac trees are nearly leaved out, and the crocuses are all blossomed," said Molly, pointing toward the end of the sunny terrace. Millicent made no response; she was quite sure that if she tried to answer she would cry. Suddenly she felt Mary's hands grasping her shoulders, and shaking her vigorously.

"Milly Austin, why didn't you tell grandmother the truth about her old horses? Why didn't you tell her that I was the one who planned the whole thing? And that I made you do as I said. I s'pose you think you're a lot better than I am because you've taken all the blame," and Molly let go her grasp on Milly's shoulders so suddenly that Millicent staggered, lost her balance, and fell from the terrace.

For a moment Mary stood frightened and not knowing what to do, for Milly was lying quite still on the soft earth. "Milly! Milly!" she exclaimed, running down the steps; but by the

time she reached her cousin, Milly was sitting up. She had been slightly stunned, but she was not hurt.

"I didn't mean to, Milly! Honest, I didn't mean to push you off the terrace," declared Mary, kneeling beside her cousin, and putting her arm about Milly.

"I know you didn't," answered Millicent, but her voice was rather faint, and Mary began to be frightened and to call "Mother! Aunt Prudence! Grandma!" at the top of her voice, and in a moment the three ladies came running from the house toward the girls.

"Milly fell off the terrace," Mary began, and then suddenly she exclaimed: "No, she didn't fall! I was shaking her, and when I let go she stumbled and fell over. It's my fault if she's hurt," and Mary began to cry.

"I'm not hurt much. I just feel funny," said Millicent, as her mother and aunt helped her to stand up. "Mary didn't mean to," she added.

"But what were you shaking Milly for?" questioned Mrs. Barclay.

Mary had jumped up and now stood facing the others.

"I shook her because I was angry," she answered, and turning ran up the steps into the house, leaving the others to follow more slowly.

Mrs. Barclay looked anxious and troubled when neither Millicent nor Mary would give any reason for Mary's outburst; and, remembering the birthday trouble, Grandma Barclay said to herself that she feared that Millicent was a troublesome child.

It had been decided that on that evening Dicky, Millicent and Blacky should give what Millicent called a "Jongleur Entertainment," and Mary's mother had invited several of her neighbors to come to hear them. As Millicent was not really hurt by her tumble off the terrace, the simple preparations were made, and soon after supper the little group of neighbors arrived; and when Milly with her drum, followed by Dicky and Blacky, entered the big sitting-room they found themselves facing a number of pleasant people whom they had never before seen. Mary kept very close to her mother, and, although Millicent tried to catch her cousin's eye, Mary would not look toward her.

"The Cadet's March," with Blacky doing his clever best, was enthusiastically applauded. Then Dicky played the piece his father had taught him on the flute. And then he made his best bow, Milly made her curtsy, and they went to sit beside Grandmother Barclay.

"But, Millicent, you haven't been a 'Jongleur' at all," Dicky declared. "She can whistle like a robin, and like a sparrow," he announced proudly, turning to the little company.

"Can she, indeed? Well, we must surely hear her," said Mary's mother; and Milly was quite ready to try, and in a moment the room seemed filled with the glad song of Master Sparrow, and then the robin's spring song was heard.

"Why, that is the best of all," said Mary, quite forgetting all the day's trouble, and she and Milly smiled happily at each other.

"Now, Mary, you and I must sing our song," said grandmother, "and as our neighbors all know it they must sing with us."

"The 'Broom Song'?" questioned one of the visitors.

"Yes; let me see!" and grandma hummed a gay note or two, and then she and Mary began singing:

"The broom-man maketh his living most sweet
By carrying brooms from street to street.
Now who would desire a pleasanter thing
Than all the day long to do nothing but sing?"

Every one joined in singing the last two lines, except the Austins, who listened with delight to the gay lilt of the song, and Millicent thought the last verse even better than the first:

"Who liveth so merry, and maketh such sport,
As those that be of the poorer sort?
The poorer sort, wheresoever they be,
They gather together by two and three,
And thus do they sing right merrily."

Then Mrs. Barclay led the way to the dining-room and there were custards and cakes, and delicious cocoa. Dicky and little Prue thought it the most wonderful evening of their short lives, as indeed it was.

As the guests said good-night each one had a word of praise for Millicent's bird notes, so that she forgot for the time the shadow of Mary's deceit.

As they all went up-stairs to bed Mary waited for Millicent and whispered: "You're going to have a surprise to-morrow," and vanished before Milly could make any response.

"Oh, dear," Millicent thought, "I wish Molly would let me alone," for she felt quite sure that any "surprise" in which her cousin had a hand meant more trouble.

Milly woke very early the next morning, and heard the early notes of the orioles. As she lay listening to them she was sure that there was a nest in the apple tree. "I shall hear them every morning, and perhaps see the little birds," she thought, and was comforted by a sense of the birds' nearness.

"Mother, do we have to stay here?" she asked, when they were ready for breakfast.

"Why, yes; and you must try and be happy here, Millicent. Your aunt and grandmother want us here. Your Uncle Barclay may not be home for weeks; and you know that father feels we are safe here while he is defending our country's rights. Try and not vex your Cousin Mary," responded Mrs. Austin. "You two girls ought to have a happy time together. It is not a time when American children should be easily angry at each other."

"It wasn't my fault yesterday, mother. Truly it wasn't," said Millicent earnestly.

"I know that, my child," replied her mother,

and at this Millicent felt that she could bear a good deal of Molly's unkindness, as long as her mother trusted her; and so she went down-stairs smiling happily, and thinking to herself that she was a little like Dr. Warren; for she had heard her father say that Dr. Warren could always keep his temper.

Dicky and Prue had already had their breakfast, and were running toward the stable with Blacky. When Milly and her mother came into the dining-room Milly thought to herself that Molly's "surprise" must have begun; for Molly's mother looked very serious, and Molly had evidently been crying. But Grandma Barclay was smiling.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Austin. "What has happened?"

"Something very fine indeed," declared Grandmother Barclay. "Mary has proven herself as brave and truthful as Millicent has been brave and unselfish. She has told us all about leading Milly into that birthday mischief. I am only sorry she did not have the courage to do it before."

Millicent turned eagerly toward her cousin.

"Oh, Molly!" she exclaimed in such a tone

of delight that the older members of the family all smiled. "Is this your surprise?"

Molly looked up and seeing her cousin's radiant face a little smile crept about her mouth as she nodded in reply.

"Well, it's splendid!" declared Milly. "Now we'll all have a good time."

CHAPTER XVII

A MESSENGER

Mrs. Austin and the children had been in Dedham a week before they received any news from Mr. Austin, and then a message came, and Sammy Crafts brought it. He came galloping up the driveway, and Milly, who was planting sweet peas in a sunny garden spot near the drive, was the first to see him.

"Oh, Sammy!" she called, jumping up and quite forgetting the half planted seeds.

"Hullo, Milly," and Sammy brought his horse to a standstill. "Say, I've had a great ride from Charles Town. And what do you think? An English soldier chased me for nearly a mile."

Milly looked up at the delighted boy admiringly.

"*We* met half-a-dozen soldiers on our way," she replied, "but we weren't a bit afraid."

Sammy dismounted, and now stood holding his horse's bridle.

"Your father sent me. I've got a letter for your mother," he explained.

Milly's face brightened. "Then let's hurry right up to the house so I can hear what he says," she urged eagerly.

"Chris! Oh, Chris!" she called, and Christopher came running down the drive. "This is our friend Samuel Adams Crafts," she explained. "Will you take care of his horse?"

"Yes, indeed, missy," responded the smiling darky, leading the tired horse toward the stable, and Milly and Sammy hurried up the driveway.

"Here come Dicky and Prue," he said, and in a moment the twins were running toward him shouting, "Sammy! Sammy Crafts!"

Millicent thought her mother looked anxious and troubled as she welcomed Sammy, and took the letter he gave her.

"Oh, mother, what does father say? Does he know anything about Master Sparrow?" questioned Dicky, who was standing very close to his mother and looking at her very earnestly.

"Your father is well; he says nothing of the bird. As indeed he has not been home since we left," replied his mother.

"So the English are repairing their boats at the foot of Boston Common?" she asked turning to Sammy.

"Yes'm; and I heard my father say they'll be crossing the Charles before many days on their way to try and capture the provisions at Concord," replied Sammy. "But Dr. Warren keeps close watch on them, and there'll be messengers sent to warn the Americans."

"There may be work for your drum before many days, Sammy," said Mrs. Austin.

"I shall be ready," replied the boy, in so serious a tone that the other children looked at him wonderingly. Sammy was quite ready for the excellent luncheon that Mrs. Barclay set before him. But he declared that he must stay only long enough for the horse to rest.

"'Twill be a clear evening, and I can get home in good season," he said; and about four o'clock in the afternoon he bade them all good-bye and rode away, turning in the saddle to wave his cap to the group on the terrace.

"A most polite and well-mannered young gentleman," declared Grandmother Barclay, as a turn in the driveway hid Sammy from view.

"He tries to act just like Dr. Warren," said

Millicent, "to walk like him, to bow the way he does, and everything."

"The young doctor is a brave and personable man," responded grandma smilingly.

"Oh! I forgot all about the sweet peas!" exclaimed Millicent, and she and Mary ran down to the strip of ground near the driveway where Millicent had been at work on Sammy's arrival. Dicky and Prue offered to bring a pail of water from the new well to moisten the earth, and in a very little while the peas were planted.

"Our mothers are talking about the English soldiers," said Mary as she and Millicent walked back to the house together. "Do you suppose they really will cross the Charles and burn all the houses?"

"Oh, Molly! They wouldn't do that!" exclaimed Millicent.

"Grandmother says they would," replied Mary soberly. "But, Milly, don't feel bad. For this is going to be your home now, forever and ever!" declared Mary.

But Millicent was crying bitterly. She was quite sure that no other place except the old stone house near the Charles River could ever be really home. Nevertheless Mary succeeded

in comforting her. The two cousins had been the best of friends ever since Molly's "surprise." Molly had been thoroughly ashamed of her deceit and mischief when she realized that, no matter what happened, Millicent did not accuse her, but bore all the blame and punishment in silence. And Mary had resolved firmly that some day she would do some splendid act to prove her gratitude to Milly. In the meantime she was a very good-natured and unselfish companion.

One night, a few days after Sammy's visit, Milly was awakened suddenly by the sound of a loud "Ho! Awake! Awake!" followed by resounding knockings at the door.

"Mother! Mother! What is it?" cried Millicent; and in a moment they were both out of bed and at the open window.

They could see a horse, dim and shadowy, standing in the driveway, and a dark figure hammering on the front door.

"What do you want? What is it?" called Mrs. Austin.

"'Tis war! The English are marching to Concord. Send some one to rouse the town that Dedham men may have their share in this.

Send some one to drum them up. I must go on to Medfield," and before Mrs. Austin could speak the man had mounted his horse and was off.

Every one in the house was now aroused. Candles were lighted, and Mrs. Austin was repeating the messenger's words. Millicent dressed as quickly as possible. At the words: "Send some one to drum them up," she had said to herself, "I can do that, I can do that," with a quick thrill of delight in the hope of aiding in the struggle for justice, of which she had heard her elders speak so constantly.

She ran to the closet where her drum was kept, swung the strap over her shoulders, picked up the drumsticks and in a moment the sharp "Call to Arms" echoed through the house.

"Mother! The messenger said to send some one to drum up the men! Let me go!" she exclaimed.

"Let her go!" said Grandma Barclay quickly. "She is ready, and there is not a second to lose. Go, child, through the street of the village! Lose not a moment," and Grandma Barclay hurried Millicent down the stairs. "Chris shall follow with a lantern; stop at every house. Be-

gin your drumming now. Bless you, dear child. Your drum may help to save your country!" and Madame Barclay stood for a moment on the terrace while again Milly's drum-beats echoed through the night, and the little figure vanished in the shadows of the avenue.

The Everetts lived very near, and Israel Everett, awakened by the "Call to Arms," flung open his door, and listened to Milly's message.

"Go on, child! Go on. I'll ring the church bell and get out the people. Thank heaven for your drum," he said; and again Milly was alone in the night, marching on, and drumming valiantly.

But all at once lanterns were flashing here and there. Little groups of men and women came hurrying along the road. Suddenly a bugle call sounded; the church bell began to ring clamorously.

"You need go no further, dear child," Millicent heard her mother speaking close beside her. "The town is roused. The minutemen, and the veterans who were in the French wars, are already gathering in front of the church. Come, let us hear the minister ask Heaven to bless them," and Mrs. Austin slipped her arm

about Milly and drew her toward the church, where Reverend William Gordon was already standing on the steps, the men waiting before him.

It was now nearly light. The little company formed in marching order, and when the women and children returned to their homes the town was almost without a male inhabitant below the age of seventy and above that of sixteen.

"Who was the man who sounded the alarm? 'Tis to him thanks are due that so little time has been lost," said a woman standing near Millicent.

"Did you not know 'twas but a slip of a girl who played the drum?" came the quick response. "It was the little maid Millicent Austin from Charles Town."

Milly felt her mother's clasp on her hand suddenly grow tighter. "We'd best go home. See! The sun is up," said Mrs. Austin.

They walked slowly along the pleasant road. Birds were singing their delight in a new day. There was the fragrance of early spring in the soft morning air. Milly walked silently by her mother's side. She did not hear the birds, nor was she thinking of her own part in the hap-

penings of the night just past. She could think only of that voice which had sounded through the shadowy night; and over and over she repeated to herself the words: "'Tis war. The English are marching toward Concord!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL

Dicky and Prue were still sound asleep when Milly and her mother reached home. Mary and her mother were getting breakfast; but they were all rather silent as they gathered about the table. Mary could hardly eat a mouthful. She sat with her eyes fixed admiringly on her Cousin Milly, and as soon as they left the table she drew Milly out to the porch.

"It's the most wonderful thing that ever happened!" she declared.

"The war?" questioned Milly.

"No! There have always been wars. What I mean is that nothing as wonderful as a girl rousing a town with her drum ever happened before. Won't your father be proud!"

"I guess I'm sleepy," Milly answered a little dully, "for I can't seem to think about anything."

"Of course you are sleepy," agreed Mary; and

Milly was quite willing to go up-stairs and to bed.

It was late that afternoon when a tired messenger came with the triumphant news that the British had been turned back, and the Americans were driving them toward Boston.

"'Tis the best of good news," declared Madame Barclay enthusiastically. And now they were all eager to be assured of the safety of those they loved who had helped defend American rights, and on the second morning this good news was brought by Sammy Crafts, whose tired horse plodded slowly up the avenue.

Sammy did not seem like a boy this morning. His face was grave; he spoke soberly. He had been one of the drummers at Lexington, and he had seen the battle on Lexington Common. They all listened eagerly as Sammy told them how the vigilant patriots of Boston had sent word to Adams and Hancock, who were in Lexington, of their suspicions that the British were preparing to march to Concord. And it was this timely notice that made the Committee of Safety make preparations to be in readiness to protect the military stores at Concord.

"'Twas Dr. Warren who sent the silversmith,

Paul Revere, across from Boston to Charles Town to ride his best and rouse all the citizens on Tuesday night," explained Sammy. "'Twas about eleven o'clock at night when he started, and he was nearly captured, but he got to Lexington by midnight, and the militia were all ready to meet the English before two o'clock."

"Was Dr. Warren hurt?" questioned Mrs. Austin.

"No, he wasn't hurt, but a lock of his hair just over his right ear was shot away. I saw him when he rode through the town on his way back to Boston." And Sammy's face brightened and glowed with the admiring enthusiasm that Dr. Warren's courage always awoke in his boyish heart.

But Sammy's news was not all good. While Milly's father and uncle were both unhurt, Mr. Everett, who had been the first one to answer Milly's "Call to Arms," was wounded; and a young Charles Town lad about Sammy's own age had been killed, and forty-nine American soldiers had lost their lives. This news made them all very sober, in spite of the great victory won by the Americans. Sammy stayed that day and night, and listened to Molly's story of Milly's

going out in the darkness to drum up the town's people with so many exclamations of surprise and delight that even Molly was satisfied.

"I guess your father will be proud when I tell him," he said, "and all the Charles Town soldiers will hear of it. You will be well praised, Milly."

"I fear now for Charles Town's safety," said Mrs. Austin anxiously. "The English batteries at Copp's Hill would destroy the town."

But Sammy was confident that American soldiers could protect their homes; and when he rode down the avenue, turning to wave his cap to his friends, they all felt that he had brought them good tidings, and that very soon peace would be restored.

"We should do something to celebrate the first victory of our brave soldiers," declared Grandmother Barclay. "Now, children, what shall we do?"

"Couldn't we have a bonfire to-night, grandma?" suggested Mary eagerly. "There's lots of old wood and stuff near the woods."

"'Twill be the very thing, if your mother agrees, Mary," said Grandmother Barclay. "Run and ask her. She's in her room."

Mary was back in a few moments. "Mother says we may, and that Christopher is to take one of the horses and draw all the old stumps and dead wood to the meadow; and that we can help him build up the heap. And mother says that she'll ask our neighbors to come over at dusk and see it lit, and give a cheer for the brave soldiers of Concord and Lexington."

This promised great sport for the children, and they were soon riding off in the big cart, behind one of the brown horses, and telling Christopher the great news from Concord.

While Chris dragged out the big half-decayed stumps the children gathered up the fallen branches, and very soon the first load was ready to start for the meadow. They worked steadily until dinner-time, and the big pile of wood in the centre of the meadow promised to make a fine blaze.

The neighbors were all eager to take part in the simple celebration of the first victory of Massachusetts soldiers, and in the afternoon a number of loads of wood were added to the bonfire.

"I can hardly wait for night to come," declared Molly as she and Millicent walked down

just before supper for a last look at the towering pile. Before they left the house Molly had whispered a request to her mother and grandmother, and their smiling assent seemed to make her very happy.

"There'll be another surprise to-night, Milly! You'll see!" she announced as she came running after her cousin.

Milly laughed gaily. "I can wait until the fire is lighted and not a minute after to find out," she said.

"Oh, you'll know by that time," declared Molly.

The neighbors began to arrive at the meadow by early twilight, and Molly and her cousins, with grandma, Mrs. Barclay and Millicent's mother were there to welcome them. Molly kept very close to Millicent, who was now eager to know what the "surprise" would be. She no longer feared any mischief or trouble from her cousin.

The older women gathered around Grandmother Barclay, and talked of the brave men of Concord and Lexington as well as of their own heroes. As the dusk of early twilight gathered the children became urgent for the

fire to be lighted; and when they saw Christopher hurrying across the field with a flaming torch there was a delighted cheer.

"The 'surprise' is almost here," Molly whispered to Milly, and Millicent began to wonder what her cousin's plan could possibly be, for there was nothing surprising in Christopher bringing the torch. When he reached the waiting group Chris turned to Molly's mother and asked:

"If you please, ma'am, who is to have the honor of lighting this fine heap of wood?"

"Give the torch to Miss Millicent, Christopher; and keep close beside her until she has started the bonfire," replied Mary's mother, with a smiling nod toward Millicent.

Millicent looked so surprised that the other children began to laugh, and she realized that this was Molly's plan.

"Come, missy," urged Christopher, who was carefully guarding the flame of the lighted torch; and Milly stepped forward and took the flaming pitch-pine knot, and went toward the heaped-up mass of dry wood. The others watched her in silence, but as she knelt and held the torch until there was a quick blaze up

the side of the heap, there was a murmur of voices, and when Millicent ran back to her mother's side one of the boys threw his cap in the air and called out: "Three cheers for America!" and every one cheered loudly. Then an elderly woman stepped out from a group and said: "Now a cheer for the brave little drummer-girl, Millicent Austin," and that too was given with a will.

Millicent was very glad that it was too shadowy for any one to see her. She wished that some one would suggest a cheer for the unknown messenger who had come rushing through the night to thunder at her uncle's door.

The bright flames streamed up through the fragrant April air, and as they brightened the wide field, the party of neighbors, children and grown people, all joined hands in a big circle around the bonfire and, led by the same boy who had started the cheer, they sang the song that every American was singing in those days:

"Come join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
And rouse your bold hearts at fair Liberty's call;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim,
Or stain with dishonor America's name."

"PLAY 'YANKEE DOODLE' !"

As the song finished there was a moment of silence, as they all stood watching the dying embers of the blaze. Then, suddenly, Milly found Molly standing in front of her holding out her drum, and Dicky close beside her, flute in hand.

"Play 'Yankee Doodle'!" demanded Mary, handing her cousin the drumsticks.

Without a word Milly beat out the gay measure, and Dicky fluted his best.

"Face about and march toward the house," called Molly; and, led by Millicent and Dicky, the others fell in line and marched gaily off across the field, leaving Christopher to make sure that the big fire was really extinguished.

At the foot of the terrace there was another cheer, "Concord and Lexington!" and then "Dedham Soldiers!" After this the neighbors said good-night. It was after ten o'clock as the children went up the terrace steps.

The children all slept late the next morning, and when they were eating their breakfast Grandmother Barclay came into the dining-room and said:

"Well, children! What do you think! Your mothers say that school begins this very day."

"But mother said she was going to teach me herself," said Molly.

"So she is. She is going to teach all four of you," explained Madame Barclay. "As soon as you finish breakfast you are all to go up attic."

"Up attic!" came in a surprised chorus from the children.

"That is what your mothers told me to tell you," replied their grandmother smilingly, and taking hold of her skirt on each side she made a graceful curtsy and went smilingly from the room.

The children looked after her with admiring eyes. As they went up the attic stairs they could hear the sound of voices, and when they reached the big open chamber to the right of the stairway they looked about in amazement.

The attic windows faced toward the orchard, and the morning sun was streaming into the room. Molly's mother and Mrs. Austin had been busy for several days, without the children's knowledge, in arranging the place for a schoolroom, and they now stood looking at the children as if asking if they liked it.

There was a little round table near one of the open windows, and upon it rested a little work-

basket. Beside the table stood a little rocking-chair. On the other side of the table, in another small chair, was seated Caroline Rosalind.

Near the other window stood a square solid bench. On one end of the bench were arranged a number of tools, and beside it was a pile of bits of wood. A short distance from this bench was a long low table, with books, slates, an ink-bottle and a number of quill pens. Two chairs, "just the right size," as Millicent afterward declared, stood near this table, and not far away was a comfortable rocking-chair and footstool.

"But I thought we were going to have lessons?" said Molly, in a puzzled tone, looking about the pleasant sunny room, and sitting down at the table. Prue had already seated herself opposite Caroline Rosalind, and Dicky was examining the sturdy work-bench with great interest. Millicent sat down near Molly, and they both looked up at Mrs. Barclay questioningly.

Mary's mother clapped her hands. "Look, Prudence! What did I tell you? They have all found their own places without our saying a word," she exclaimed in evident delight.

"Is this school?" demanded Dicky, turning

toward his mother, and holding a file in one hand and a small saw in the other.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Austin smilingly. "Your Aunt Ann is to be teacher to-day, and I am to be teacher to-morrow. I think your school will be a success, Ann," she added, "and now I'll leave you to the opening exercises," and she turned toward the stairs.

"You see, Prue," said Aunt Ann, going over to the little table, "I noticed that Caroline Rosalind needed a new dress, so I thought you would like to make one for her. And here it is, all cut out and basted; and your needle, thread and thimble are right in this little box," and in a moment little Prue, feeling very happy and important, was being shown how to set the tiny stitches in the doll's dress.

Then Aunt Ann went to Dicky's bench and began to tell him the names and uses of the tools. "I want you to make me some good wooden pegs, Dicky," she said, as he tried the sharp knife on a piece of well-seasoned pine wood, "and when they are just right, I'll show you how to make use of them," and Dicky began to whittle happily, and Mrs. Barclay then turned toward her older pupils, but neither

Milly nor Molly noticed her. Both their heads were bent over an open book on the table in front of them. So Mrs. Barclay seated herself in the comfortable rocking-chair, and took up her knitting.

In a moment Mary looked up.

"When are you going to begin school, mother?" she asked.

"Why, school has begun already, my dear," her mother replied smilingly.

There was a little chorus of laughter and exclamations from the children.

"Why, we're just having a good time!" declared Dicky, looking up from his whittling.

"That's what I mean for you to have every day," said his Aunt Ann.

May passed, and early in June Captain Barclay came to visit his family, and brought messages from Milly's father. Charles Town would not be safe for many a day, Mr. Austin wrote, and Milly began to think that perhaps she would never again see the dear stone house near the river, nor the tall slim spire of the church in the square. In a few days Captain Barclay returned to his regiment; and the very next week

came tidings that the Americans had begun to fortify Breed Hill, an elevation of land in Charles Town toward Boston from Bunker Hill.

Grandma Barclay read the letter from Molly's father giving this news, and the children listened with wondering eyes.

"That means that the British will try to destroy Charles Town," declared Mrs. Austin; and Millicent thought that she had never before seen her mother look so unhappy.

"Molly, you and your cousins go out on the terrace," said Mrs. Barclay, and the children went quietly away. Molly put her arm around Milly as they left the room, while Dicky and Prue ran ahead and were soon frolicking about the garden with Blacky; but the older girls realized that their fathers, and the home Milly so loved, was in danger, and for a few moments they stood quite still.

"I wish we'd stayed near father," said Milly in a whisper.

"Let's go down toward the road. Who knows but we may see a messenger coming with good news," suggested Molly hopefully; and the girls walked down the elm-shaded avenue, and stood looking with eager eyes along the quiet country

road which led toward Boston; but no speeding horseman could be seen, and they soon returned to the house.

The next day, June 17, 1775, was one of the warmest days of that summer. Even the shaded rooms of the big Barclay house were too warm for comfort; and Dicky and Prue were content to keep out of the sun and play on the porch, while Milly and Molly stayed with their mothers in the cool sitting-room.

"A dreadful day for marching soldiers," said Grandma Barclay, as she bent over her sewing. The little household could not know that, at that very hour, the English and American soldiers were engaged in deadly battle on the slopes of Bunker Hill; that their friend Dr. Warren was in the ranks as a volunteer, that the town of Charles Town was in flames, set by a party of marines from the "Somerset."

But the news came the next morning, and with it the sad tidings that Dr. Warren had been killed. Sammy Crafts was again the messenger, a tired, white-faced boy.

"I am to stay here a few days, if you will keep me," he said, as he came slowly up the steps beside Mrs. Barclay.

"Indeed you may. You are as welcome as if it were your mother's house," declared Mrs. Barclay.

Captain Barclay was unhurt, he told them; but Mr. Austin was slightly wounded, and would come to Dedham in a day or two. And then Sammy, resting on the big couch in the sitting-room, with the family listening eagerly, told them of the terrible battle of Bunker Hill. He described the entrenchments on Breed Hill, and of the Americans throwing up breastworks on Bunker Hill, where they made their stand.

"Where were you, Sammy?" asked Milly.

"I was in Cambridge until midday, then I went to our house to make sure that mother was all right. Father made me promise to stay there until he came," said Sammy, "and he got there, with your father, just after dark last night. He told us about Dr. Warren; only he was General Warren that day. Father said"— and Sammy's voice faltered, but he went on— "father said that when some one tried to keep General Warren in a safe place he wouldn't listen; and said that it was sweet and right to have the chance to die for one's country." As Sammy repeated these words he buried his face in the cushion and sobbed bitterly.

Milly felt the tears streaming down her cheeks, and Mrs. Austin and Grandma Barclay were crying. It was Mrs. Barclay who led Dicky and Prue out of the room, and persuaded Dicky to go to the stable with a message for Christopher.

When she returned she called Milly and Molly and asked their help in preparing dinner; and reminded Milly that very soon her father would be there to be taken care of and helped to recover from his wound.

"I wish I knew if Soldier Francis was in the battle. I hope he wasn't," said Milly; and when Sammy, after a long rest, came out on the porch, she questioned him eagerly for news of the English soldier.

Sammy shook his head. "I don't know. Many were killed, but not most of them, of course, because they took the hill at last. Maybe he's safe," he added hopefully.

"Could you hear the cannons?" asked Molly.

"Yes. The 'Falcon' and 'Lively' and the 'Somerset' were all pouring shot on the American works, and so were the batteries at Copp's Hill. Hear cannon! I guess we couldn't hear anything else!" declared Sammy. "Father said

the American soldiers cheered like everything when General Warren came. He said the British men were brave too, and followed General Howe straight up the hill, with the Americans firing as fast as they could."

Sammy had promptly assured Mrs. Austin of the safety of her home. The battle had not reached that part of the town, nor had the flames spread that far.

"The houses in the square were burning when I rode through Cambridge," said Sammy. "I guess you could see the smoke from here."

It was a week later before Mr. Austin reached Dedham. He had a week's furlough on account of his wounded arm, and on his arrival Sammy started back to his own home.

"You will be coming back to Charles Town soon, won't you?" Sammy asked Mrs. Austin, as he said good-bye; but Mr. Austin shook his head.

"Not until we have driven the British from Boston," he answered.

"Well, that will be soon," declared Sammy hopefully.

CHAPTER XIX

GOOD NEWS

"MOTHER, couldn't I write a letter to Soldier Francis?" asked Milly, when her father's leave of absence was over and he had returned to Cambridge, the headquarters of the American forces.

"Why, yes, Milly. I see no harm in your writing to Soldier Francis if you say nothing of this sad war," replied Mrs. Austin; "but I doubt if the letter will reach him."

But Milly was eager to write, and a few days later the letter was sent, and Milly was very hopeful that an answer would soon come. But weeks passed; June and July were over, August came and went, and there was no word from Soldier Francis. Millicent began to be quite sure that her English friend had been killed in battle; and she was more attached than ever to Blacky, and often thought of the friendly soldier who had been so ready to protect a little girl.

September came, and one morning Milly awoke to find her mother standing close beside the bed and heard her say: "What day is this?" and as she leaned over and kissed her little daughter she said softly: "Eleven years old!"

"Oh, I forgot all about it. My birthday!" exclaimed Millicent, jumping out of bed.

"Dicky and Prue and Molly are all up and dressed, and everybody is waiting to wish you a happy birthday," said her mother smilingly; and it was not long before Milly was running down the stairs, while Molly, Dicky, Prue and Grandma Barclay called: "Happy Birthday," "Happy Birthday," and her Aunt Ann led her to the dining-room.

Near Milly's plate on the breakfast table were a number of packages. There was a wonderful box with "Milly" carved on the cover. Dicky had made this box himself, and he was as delighted by Milly's praise as she was by his remembrance. There were some beautiful handkerchiefs from Aunt Ann, two bright silver shillings from her father and mother, and a package of barley sugar from Molly and Prue.

Milly undid each gift with exclamations of pleasure. Then she looked them all over again,

a little anxiously, for there was no remembrance from dear Grandma Barclay; and never before had Millicent had a birthday without such a gift. But grandma was smiling happily at her across the breakfast table, and Milly smiled back, for it was a beautiful thing to be eleven years old, she thought.

When they had all finished grandma came to Millicent's side and said, "Come out on the terrace, dear child. I have something to show you."

Millicent wondered a little why the others were all smiling, and why her Cousin Molly seemed so greatly excited about something. As they reached the terrace Millicent saw Christopher standing at the foot of the steps holding one of the brown horses by the bridle. There was a side-saddle on the horse's back, and Milly thought she had never seen "Star's" brown coat so smooth and glossy.

Christopher was smiling, and as he saw Milly he called out, "Happy birthday, missy."

Grandma had kept close hold of Milly's hand, and now led her down the steps.

"Give me the bridle, Chris," she said, and then she handed it to Millicent.

"This is your birthday present, dear Millicent," she said smilingly.

For a moment Millicent stared in amazement. She hardly understood what her grandmother meant. She looked first at the brown horse and then at her grandmother.

"Star? Mine?" she said.

"Yes, Milly. Grandma has just told you," exclaimed Molly delightedly.

"Oh, grandma! And the saddle?" asked Millicent.

"Yes. The horse and saddle are yours, and Christopher will give you your first riding lesson to-day," said Madame Barclay. "Ever since Soldier Francis brought the horses home I have planned to give you 'Star' for your birthday present; and the saddle is one your mother used when she was a little girl."

It seemed to Millicent that no little girl ever had such a wonderful birthday present before. She hardly knew how to thank her grandmother, and when Christopher lifted her to the saddle, and led "Star" up and down the driveway, and then let her guide the horse herself she was as happy as it was possible to be.

But another surprise was in store for her, for

Christopher had led out the other brown horse and that, too, carried a side-saddle, and now Molly was on the horse's back, and the two little cousins rode down the drive together.

"This is my mother's saddle," explained Molly, "and grandma says I can use 'Hero' all I want to; but he isn't my horse as 'Star' is yours."

"We'll have a lot of good rides, won't we, Molly?" said Milly, as the two cousins dismounted and saw Chris lead the horses away.

"Yes, and it's splendid that 'Star' is your very own," responded Molly.

Then the birthday dinner was spread on a round table in the orchard. There was the fragrance of ripening fruit in the air, and a pleasant little murmur of industrious bees hovering about the late blooming flowers at the edge of the garden. As Millicent cut her birthday cake, and gave Molly the first piece, she thought that now she was beginning to really "grow up." Eleven seemed very much older than ten. She resolved to do her best to be more like Grandmother Barclay every day.

As the autumn days grew shorter the "attic" school was moved to one of the pleasant sitting-

rooms. Dicky was becoming an expert in the use of tools; little Prue's neat stitches won her great praise, and Milly and Molly had learned to solve many difficult examples, to repeat a list of the English kings, and were familiar with the life and adventures of Christopher Columbus.

Then, as Milly and Molly learned to ride, the two girls had many delightful canters along the pleasant country roads and lanes. With the coming of the cold weather there was sliding and skating, visits to the neighbors, and in the evenings Milly and Dicky, with drum and flute, would entertain the others, or Madame Barclay and Mary sing the "Broom Song." The winter passed quickly, and when March came the Austins realized with surprise that it was nearly a year since they left their Charles Town home.

Lieutenant Austin had made but one visit to Dedham since Millicent's birthday. He was in Cambridge with Washington's Army. Early in March he sent his family the good news that the Americans held Dorchester Heights, and that very soon, it was hoped, the British would leave Boston. And it was only a few days after the receipt of her father's letter that the tidings

came that General Howe and his army had taken to their ships.

And now Milly felt sure that she should never see Soldier Francis again. If he had not been killed in battle he had surely sailed away in one of the English vessels; and, while she was now eagerly looking forward to returning to her Charles Town home, she often wished that her soldier friend might know how often she thought of him.

Mrs. Austin was sure that Charles Town people would soon return and rebuild their homes; and Dicky began to talk about Master Sparrow, and the playhouse in the willow tree.

Milly did not say much about leaving Dedham, but Molly knew that her cousin's thoughts were now centered on the old stone house near the river; and one pleasant morning in early April when the girls were searching for Mayflowers along the edge of a wood bordering on the highway, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Milly! Why do you want to go back to Charles Town?"

Milly looked up with a little laugh. "Why, it's home. Isn't that reason enough?" she answered.

"But most of the houses were burned down; and the schoolhouse was burned and the churches. It's a blackened ugly place; your father said so," responded Molly.

"Well, our house wasn't burned; and Mrs. Crafts' house and Bunker Hill are safe," said Milly, laughingly; "and father is going to build boats again; he wrote mother so. You'll like to go back, won't you, Blacky?" and she patted the head of the little dog, who was never far away from his little mistress.

Molly did not make any response, and when Milly glanced at her cousin she saw that Molly had been crying.

"I don't care if I am crying," said Molly. "You will go off to Charles Town and not care at all about leaving me."

"We won't want to leave you, Molly! You know we won't. And perhaps your mother will let you come and visit us," said Milly. "I heard her say that grandmother would soon be going back to Roxbury, and that grandma wanted you to go with her."

"Do you suppose you'll go before summer?" asked Molly.

But Millicent could not answer this question,

and the cousins began to talk of the flowers, and Millicent to practice the calls of the woodland birds. As they came out on the main road and started for home they looked at each other with startled eyes, for in the distance they heard the beat of a drum.

"There isn't a place to hide," exclaimed Molly, "and it's coming nearer and nearer."

"We needn't be afraid of a drum!" declared Milly, and a moment later both the girls called out: "Oh! It's Sammy Crafts," and ran eagerly to meet the tall boy, who came marching down the road from the Barclay house with Millicent's drum swinging from his shoulders.

"Thought the drum would find you," he said smilingly, as he came near.

"Oh, Sammy Crafts! And did my father come too?" exclaimed Milly in a delighted voice.

"No. But he is staying at our house; and he has sent me to fetch you all back to Charles Town," replied Sammy. "He's all right," he added quickly, "but he's busy. You see, he is taking care of Soldier Francis."

Milly and Molly were both too surprised to ask how such a thing could happen, but Sammy went on to explain that only yesterday the

English soldier had made his way to the Austin house, and Lieutenant Austin had discovered him near the door, very weak and ill.

He had been left behind by the English on account of his illness; and, having no friends in Boston, had made his way to the only American home where he dared hope for a welcome.

"He's going to work with your father when he gets stronger," said Sammy, "and he's going to be an American, too."

This was the best news that Millicent could have, and she was more eager than ever to start for home. She was sure now that her letter had reached Soldier Francis.

Sammy declared that his mother was the bravest woman in America. "She stayed right in our house, and didn't know what was happening to father and me for weeks. She took care of all the stock and we didn't lose a thing," he said proudly.

Mrs. Austin was as eager to start for home as Milly, and it was decided to go the next day.

Every one was up in good season the next morning, and the sun was just creeping over the tops of the distant woodlands when Christopher led "Goldy" from the stable. The little sorrel

stood quietly while the trunk was strapped on behind the chaise, and bundles and baskets stowed under the broad seat. Mrs. Austin, Dicky and Prue were in the chaise, and now Christopher lifted Millicent to her seat on "Star's" back. Sammy was mounted on a fine black horse, and Blacky was running from Molly's side to Milly, as if he really wished Molly to go with the others.

"Good-bye, dear Blacky," she said. "I shall never be afraid of dogs again; at any rate, not of spaniels."

The good-byes had all been said, with promises of all meeting again very soon. And now Mrs. Austin told Goldy that it was time to start, and off he went as if he realized that he was bound for home, as perhaps he did.

Sammy looked at "Star" admiringly as he and Milly rode side by side, keeping close to the chaise.

"It isn't every girl who has a fine horse like 'Star,'" he said, "and you can ride first rate."

When they reached the hill where Mrs. Austin had encountered the English soldiers a year ago, Mrs. Austin told Sammy of the officer's wish that her visit might be "brief and pleasant."

"Let's have lunch in the same place," said Dicky; "there were lots of violets there last year." So they turned in at the wood-road, and Sammy looked after the horses while Milly and her mother spread the contents of the lunch-basket on a smooth bank of green moss. Dicky and Prue were searching for violets, and found as many as they had in the previous April.

"Mother! I never knew you to laugh so much!" declared Millicent, as they finished lunch and made ready to continue their journey. "Your eyes are all twinkly, and you act as if you were so happy you just bubbled over."

Mrs. Austin laughed gaily. "That's just it, my dear," she answered. "Just think, our house is safe and sound, and we are going back to live in it. The English have left Boston; and, best of all, your dear father is safe and well."

"And don't forget that Soldier Francis is going to be an American," added Millicent, in so serious a tone that Mrs. Austin and Sammy both laughed heartily; and Dicky and Prue joined in the laughter, not because they were amused by their sister's seriousness, but because it seemed just the day for laughter.

It was a very merry little cavalcade which drew rein before Mrs. Crafts' door in the early afternoon.

Mrs. Crafts came running out to welcome them. "Your husband is at your house," she said to Mrs. Austin, "and I guess you'll find everything pretty nearly as you left it."

Mrs. Austin paused only for the friendly word of greeting.

"Sammy and his father and I will step over and see you to-morrow," Mrs. Crafts called after them as they rode away.

Milly had ridden all the way on "Star," and had not thought of being tired.

"Everything looks just the same, doesn't it, mother?" Milly said as they drove along the peaceful road where, less than a year ago, the thunder and noise of battle had been heard.

"Just the same," replied her mother gratefully.

"There comes father!" called Dicky as they came under the shade of the big willow tree, and Mr. Austin came running down to open the gate, and joyfully welcome them home again.

It was Blacky who ran gaily ahead of all

the family through the open kitchen door, and was the first to greet Soldier Francis; but Milly was close behind him, and Mrs. Austin hastened in to tell the big Englishman how glad she was to find him there. Francis had little to say, but Mr. Austin had convinced him that the neighbors would all be friendly, and that there was work and a home for him. He had received Milly's letter, and it was that which had encouraged him to come to the Austin home.

"This is the happiest day!" declared Milly as they all gathered around the supper-table.

"Happier than birthdays?" asked her father smilingly.

"Yes, indeed! For you are here, and Soldier Francis is here," replied Milly.

The big soldier smiled, but his face had flushed a little.

"Would you mind saying 'Francis'? I'm no longer a soldier," he said.

"I'll remember," promised Milly.

Dicky and Prue searched eagerly for many days for some trace of Master Sparrow, and often came running to the house saying they were sure that they had heard him singing.

The story of Milly's part in arousing the

minutemen of Dedham was often told among her friends and neighbors, and whenever the "little drummer girl of Charles Town" visited her Cousin Molly she was warmly welcomed, and often played the drum to entertain the brave soldiers who had so promptly marched to defend their country in response to that "Call to Arms" that Milly had so bravely sounded as she hurried along the shadowy road on the night before the Battle of Lexington.